

REPORT OF THE SYNODICAL PRESIDENT

to

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

In compliance with Resolution 2-28
of the 49th Regular Convention of the Synod,
held at Milwaukee, Wisconsin,
July 9—16, 1971

Upon receipt of
PROGRESS REPORT
OF THE BOARD OF CONTROL
OF CONCORDIA SEMINARY,
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI,

Relative to its action taken on the basis
of the report of the Fact Finding Committee
appointed by the Synodical President

September 1, 1972

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
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1. PREFACE

To the Members of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod: Congregations, Pastors, Teachers:

The following report is herewith submitted to The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod in compliance with Resolution 2-28 of the 1971 convention of the Synod, held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Those who attended the Milwaukee convention will recall that many delegates called for immediate release of the report of the committee appointed by the synodical President to determine facts concerning doctrine and life at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. They will also recall that the Synod resolved to grant the Board of Control a year to review the report of the Fact Finding Committee and take whatever action might be appropriate.

Resolution 2-28 of the Milwaukee convention called for a report by the Board of Control of the seminary to the synodical President and the Board for Higher Education at the end of one year. The synodical President in turn was instructed to report to the Synod.

The seminary Board of Control submitted its report to the synodical President on June 22, 1972. It included a review of the board's activities for the year, complete copies of transcripts of the interviews with the professors (corrected by the professors themselves to take into account clerical errors), and responses by the professors to sum-

maries of their interviews prepared by the Fact Finding Committee.

The following report to the Synod by the synodical President undertakes to present a complete picture to the Synod. It is lengthy because a study of the theology of a seminary is no small task.

The report contains evaluations by the synodical President. This is implicit in Resolution 2-28 and in his constitutional responsibilities for the supervision of the doctrine of the Synod (Article XI).

In fairness the summaries of the interviews of the individual faculty positions prepared by the Fact Finding Committee are not included in the synodical President's report to the Synod. Some of the professors took exception to some of the statements in the summaries. Hence they are omitted, as are the responses of the individual professors to the summaries. Instead long sections are quoted from the actual interviews themselves and from essays or articles. In each case it is believed sufficient material is presented in this report to assure the preservation of adequate context.

In reading samples of the transcripts under individual headings, please keep in mind that these are from tape recordings of the interviews. Hence the language of questions

and answers alike cannot be expected to conform to the customary smoothness usually found in a written essay. This is to be expected.

Note also that each professor was given the option of changing or adding to his testimony if he so desired. Also, the transcripts quoted are from copies corrected by the professors themselves.

Despite great care, it is inevitable that errors will creep in. However, every effort has been made to minimize this. Corrections, if validated, will be freely made.

Attention has also been given to preserving the anonymity of the professors. Where articles are quoted, a different code designation is used ("XX" in every case), so that one cannot identify the author of a public article with an interviewee in a transcript.

Perhaps this precaution was not necessary, for we are dealing with positions openly espoused in the public classrooms of the seminary. However, it was felt best not to point to particular individuals at this time. Where there are doctrinal aberrations, the individuals will be dealt with as individuals with all the rights involved in due process and under procedures outlined in the Bylaws of the Synod.

Outsiders may find this type of activity in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod unusual and perhaps difficult to understand. Such a response is to be expected in a secular age when even Christians often do not take the Holy Scriptures seriously. But the Missouri Synod is a Lutheran body that is grateful that God has preserved it as a Biblical and confessional church. It takes matters of doctrine and life seriously. This is in the best tradition of the Christian church throughout the centuries. We pray to God that it may always be so with us!

The reader will find abundant references to the Lutheran Confessions in some of the sections of this report. It is our conviction that the teachings of the seminary on controverted points are best judged in the light of how the Lutheran confessors understood the Scriptures. For all agree on this, that we must determine what it means to be truly Lutheran.

Please remember also that although this report deals in great part with doctrinal problems, we have many fine professors on our seminary faculty, and we have great agreement among all that the task of the preacher is to proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ and His suffering and death for our salvation. We must thank God for the Gospel witness that has been made on the campus of Concordia Seminary. Many fine things can be said about the seminary throughout its long history. But as this report will make abundantly clear, we do have problems at the seminary which have increasingly threatened the unity of our Synod.

We have enjoyed a great degree of agreement among us which has aided us as we have carried on our mission. It is the hope of restoring this unity both of faith and of objective that prompted the synodical President to embark on the fact-finding procedure. The objective is the healing

of the Synod, not its further division or fragmentation. We have been divided too long. We have fragmented constantly. It is the prayer of your President that in getting down to an open and forthright discussion of the problems which trouble us, we will under the guidance of the Holy Spirit be able to reach consensus on the basis of God's Word and our Lutheran Confessions. We will then emerge from this ordeal a stronger, more united, and more committed church.

As one aid to the achievement of this goal, the Commission on Theology and Church Relations has been asked by the Milwaukee convention and also by the President of the Synod to embark on a program of study of the issues which trouble us. This program, which will extend over the winter months, will embrace the congregations, circuits, and Districts of our church. Study guidelines are being prepared. They will set forth the issues and will attempt to provide opportunities for all sides to be heard. This procedure should be helpful as the Synod prepares itself for important decisions at the New Orleans convention. Above all, we hope by this process as well as by this report to move from discussions of procedures and personalities into discussion of the issues.

With reference to this report, as you read, take heed as to how you hear and how you read. This report is not issued in order to stir up controversy or to make life unpleasant for individuals. It is intended as part of a process of healing and reconciliation on the basis of the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. We are a family—a family of Lutheran Christians, a family which has long enjoyed fellowship in our common loyalty and our confessions of our Lord Jesus Christ. We need to remember that members of families sometimes disagree. But we disagree in love, and we seek in every possible way to restore peace within our family.

While the issues are many and complex, the St. Louis Seminary faculty and the synodical President at a meeting on May 17, 1972, agreed that the basic issue is the relationship between the Scriptures and the Gospel. To put the matter in other words, the question is whether the Scriptures are the norm for our faith and life or whether the Gospel alone is that norm. Please keep this in mind as you read this material, because it will shed light on many things that are said.

This report is herewith submitted to our beloved Synod in sincere Christian love and with the prayer that it may help to restore peace and concord. The only solution to our differences, under God's blessing and with His power, is to be truly faithful to His Word and the Lutheran Confessions. In this way alone will we both preserve the Gospel in its fullness and purity as well as unite in proclaiming it to the world. We all long for the time when our full energies will be devoted to the positive work of the great mission our Savior has given us.

God's Word is our great heritage
And shall be ours forever;
To spread its light from age to age
Shall be our chief endeavor.
Through life it guides our way,
In death it is our stay.
Lord, grant, while worlds endure,
We keep its teachings pure
Throughout all generations. Amen.

In the name of Jesus,



J. A. O. Preus, President
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

2. HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

The November 1, 1970, issue of the *Lutheran Witness Reporter* carried the announcement that the synodical President had determined to appoint a committee of five men to inquire into doctrine and life at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. In taking this step the President of the Synod set forth five objectives for the committee of inquiry. They read as follows:

Since we are brethren of our Lord, members of the body of Christ, we live under the words of Jesus to Peter: "Strengthen thy brethren." Therefore, the purpose of this committee, created under constitutional powers granted the president in his supervision of doctrine and life, has as its objective:

1. To strengthen our synodical bond by consulting with the brethren who have been called by the Synod to prepare men for the Gospel ministry;
2. To protect the seminary against unfounded criticism and charges in the area of doctrine and life;
3. To ascertain facts underlying the criticism;
4. To make certain that our seminary students are taught the Word of God in its truth and purity, that they are firm in their confessional subscription, and that our Synod, reassured of these facts, may continue to move forward in its proclamation of the Gospel;
5. To share with the president of the Synod the findings of this fact-finding committee. He in turn will make his report and possible recommendations to the board of control. A report will also be made to the Synod.

This report was received in various ways by various groups. In a world where many no longer take seriously either the Holy Scriptures or the teachings of the Christian Church, it was greeted with cries of derision and with references to "heresy trial" and "witch hunting." Within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod itself there were many who felt the action of appointing a fact finding committee constituted an over-stepping of the powers of the Synodical President and that, indeed, such an inquiry was unnecessary. On the other hand, there were many who felt that such action was long overdue and constituted a proper functioning of the synodical President under the constitutional provision which calls upon him to supervise the doctrine of the Synod (Article XI B, 1, 2, 3).*

Viewed in proper historical perspective, however, the appointment of the Fact Finding Committee will be seen to be a necessary step in a long process in which The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has been wrestling with doctrinal and theological problems and in particular in these later years with the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures itself. It is the purpose of this historical introduction to trace the developments which led the synodical President to the appointment of the Fact Finding Committee. It will also delineate the activities of the committee itself as well as the subsequent action of the Synod at the Milwaukee convention and the report of the Board of Control to the synodical President in the summer of 1972.

Concern for Pure Doctrine

A study of the history of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod will reveal that the Synod has always been concerned about its doctrine. Indeed, the Constitution of the Synod, in the third article, lists as the first object of the Synod: "The conservation and promotion of the unity of the true faith (Eph. 4:3-6; 1 Cor. 1:10) and a united defense against schism and sectarianism (Rom. 16:17)."

In seeking to remain faithful to this object the Synod has reflected the spirit of the Lutheran confessors who in the Formula of Concord declared:

* XI B. Duties of the President

1. The President has the supervision regarding the doctrine and the administration of —
 - a. All officers of the Synod;
 - b. All such as are employed by the Synod;
 - c. The individual Districts of the Synod;
 - d. All District Presidents.
 2. It is the President's duty to see to it that all the aforementioned act in accordance with the Synod's Constitution, to admonish all who in any way depart from it, and, if such admonition is not heeded, to report such cases to the Synod.
 3. The President has and always shall have the power to advise, admonish, and reprove. He shall conscientiously use all means at his command to promote and maintain unity of doctrine and practice in all the Districts of the Synod.
-

From our exposition friends and foes may clearly understand that we have no intention (since we have no authority to do so) to yield anything of the eternal and unchangeable truth of God for the sake of temporal peace, tranquillity, and outward harmony. Nor would such peace and harmony last, because it would be contrary to the truth and actually intended for its suppression. Still less by far are we minded to whitewash or cover up any falsification of true doctrine or any publicly condemned errors. We have a sincere delight in and a deep love for true harmony and are cordially inclined and determined on our part to do everything in our power to further the same. We desire such harmony as will not violate God's honor, that will not detract anything from the truth of the Holy Gospel, that will not give place to the smallest error but will lead the poor sinner to true and sincere repentance, raise him up through faith, strengthen him in his new obedience, and thus justify and save him forever through the sole merit of Christ, and so forth. (*Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article XI, "Election,"* pp. 95—6. Tappert Edition)

Conventions 1950—69

Conventions of the Synod for the last two decades were constantly requested to apply the Word of God to doctrinal questions which were troubling the church. There can be no doubt concerning the intention of our people to remain faithful to the Scriptures and the historic creeds of our church.

During these years the Synod was called upon to answer questions as to what was truly Scriptural doctrine with reference to creation, revelation and inspiration, the historical reliability and truthfulness of the Scriptures versus the concept of the Bible being marred by human limitations and by the embellishment of traditional stories, the immortality of the soul, the physical resurrection of the body. It was called upon to answer questions about the authorship of the Pentateuch, of Daniel, of Isaiah; the authenticity of the New Testament books; the manner and extent of the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies in Jesus Christ; the historicity of the Jonah account; the proper use of the historical-critical method; the new hermeneutic and its applicability to the Scriptures; the binding nature of the witness of Jesus to the Old Testament; the historicity of Adam and Eve, of the fall, of the flood, etc.

It is important to note that it never was the purpose of the Synod to create doctrine. It strove only to faithfully recognize the teachings of the Scriptures.

Cleveland Convention

The study of convention proceedings from 1950 to 1969 demonstrates several important points. First, the Synod felt perfectly free in convention to declare itself and to enunciate its doctrinal stance on the basis of the Scriptures and the Confessions. For example, the Cleveland convention in 1962 was concerned with the doctrine of Scripture and resolved:

That we reaffirm our belief in the plenary, verbal inspiration of Scripture, the inerrancy of Scripture, and that Scripture is in all its words and parts the very Word of God, as taught in the Scripture itself (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21) and in the Lutheran Confessions;

That we reaffirm the Scripturally implicit hermeneutical principles that the Bible does not contradict itself and that the clear passages of Scripture must interpret the less clear;

That we confess unequivocally that all true theological statements and propositions must be in accord with the above stated Biblical principles. (*Proceedings*, 1962, p. 104, Resolution 3-16)

Detroit Convention

During the 1965 convention in Detroit the Synod reaffirmed its belief "that the Old Testament prophecies of the Savior find their fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Savior of sinners." (*Proceedings*, 1965, p. 100, Resolution 2-26)

The same convention also reaffirmed the historicity of the Jonah account. The resolution reads:

That the Synod affirm its conviction that the events recorded in the Book of Jonah did occur as shown by —

- a) historical data in the book itself;
- b) our Lord's reference to Jonah and Nineveh in the New Testament (Matt. 12:38-42; Luke 11:29-32);

That the Synod urge the reader and interpreter of the Book of Jonah to treat the literary and miraculous details of the book in such manner that the specific prophetic message of Jonah for the church in our time is emphasized. (*Proceedings*, 1965, p. 100, Resolution 2-27)

The same convention resolved:

That The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod reaffirms its belief that Adam and Eve were historical persons who fell into sin and were redeemed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and that it abide by its official pronouncement regarding these matters as expressed in the Formula of Concord, Epitome, Art. I; Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration, Art. I; *Brief Statement*, paragraphs 5, 6, 7. (*Proceedings*, 1965, p. 101, Resolution 2-29)

With reference to the authorship of the Pentateuch and Isaiah, the Detroit convention resolved:

Resolved, That the Synod answer these questions by appealing to what the Scriptures themselves say, as for example: "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" (John 5:46, 47; cf. Luke 24:27). "And He stood up to read; and there was given to Him the book of the prophet Isaiah" (Luke 4:16, 17; cf. Matt. 4:14-16; Rom. 10:16-20). Thus the Scriptures ascribe the Pentateuch and the Book of Isaiah to Moses and Isaiah respectively. The Scriptures do not in so many words ascribe the human authorship exclusively to these men, but neither do they in so many words negate these conclusions; and be it further

Resolved, That while we uphold the importance of the human authorship of the Scriptures, even though the human author of each book cannot be ascertained, we recognize that divine authorship is the dominant factor in the origin of the Bible, as the Synod emphasizes in the statement it adopted in 1959 (*Proceedings*, p. 189): "We condemn and reject any and all teachings and statements that would limit the inerrancy and sufficiency of Scripture or that deny the divine authorship of certain portions of Scripture" (*Statement on Scripture*, 1958); and be it finally

Resolved, That in our preaching and teaching we do not bind consciences by saying more than the Scriptures say on these matters, and that, on the other hand, we warn against the use of theories regarding the authorship of Isaiah and the Pentateuch which detract from or nullify the divine authority of these books. (*Proceedings*, 1965, p. 103, Resolution 2-35)

New York Convention

Likewise the New York convention in 1967 in its desire to maintain Biblical doctrine adopted resolutions dealing with CTCR documents "A Lutheran Stance Toward Contemporary Biblical Studies" and "The Witness of Jesus and Old Testament Authorship."

Resolution 2-30 of the same convention states:

That we reaffirm our position on the following matters of doctrine:

1. That the Holy Scripture is the inerrant Word of God.
2. That Christ has made atonement for the sins of the whole world and thus propitiated God's wrath against sin.
3. That Christ rose from the dead glorified in His flesh (*sarx*).
4. That the soul of man does not cease to exist after death and that only those who believe in Christ receive eternal life.

That we affirm our position that those who teach otherwise are in error. (*Proceedings*, 1967, p. 95)

Resolution 2-31 of the same convention upheld our church's position on the historicity of Adam and Eve and their fall into sin, and resolved:

That the Synod reject and condemn all those world views, philosophical theories, exegetical interpretations, and other hypotheses which pervert these Biblical teachings and thus obscure the Gospel. (*Proceedings*, 1967, p. 95)

Denver Convention

The Denver Convention in 1969 stated:

Whereas, The Synod in previous conventions has reaffirmed its doctrinal stance by urging its members to uphold and honor the doctrinal content of synodically adopted statements under the norms of Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions (cf. *Proceedings*, 1965, 2-08, p. 96; *Proceedings*, 1962, 3-17, pp. 105 ff.) . . .

Resolved, That by the grace and mercy of God the Synod abide by its doctrinal position as stated in its Constitution (Art. II) and "uphold and honor the doctrinal content of the synodically adopted statements under the norms of Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions" (*Proceedings*, 1965, 2-08, p. 96); and be it further

Resolved, That the provisions established by the Synod for disciplinary action and removal from office be evangelically followed and carried out; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod commend the President of the Synod for his conscientious efforts in carrying out evangelically the difficult task of doctrinal supervision; and be it further

Resolved, That the President of the Synod and others responsible for doctrinal supervision be earnestly and prayerfully encouraged to continue such supervision according to the procedures of the synodical *Handbook*; and be it finally

Resolved, That all members of the Synod be encouraged to support and cooperate with the President of the Synod and other officers responsible for doctrinal supervision in order that peace and unity be maintained. (*Proceedings*, 1967, pp. 85—6, Resolution 2-06)

In addition to fervently stating its position on several of the controverted points, the Synod referred matters for study to various agencies and particularly to the Commission on Theology and Church Relations.

Unresolved Doctrinal Difficulties

As early as 1950 a memorial had been sent to the Synod requesting an investigation of the St. Louis faculty (*Reports and Memorials*, 1950, pp. 499-506). Subsequent memorials and overtures found in the workbooks of various conventions refer to the St. Louis Seminary faculty as well as to various individuals on the staff. Names are often not mentioned because of the policy of reducing this to a minimum in the printing of the workbooks as well as in the action taken by the convention in its resolutions. However, it is quite evident that over a period of many years members of the Synod have been deeply troubled over some of the teaching at the St. Louis Seminary. In fact, most of the doctrinal resolutions passed during these years involved the teaching of the seminary.

It is also evident that the conventions, while emphasizing the importance of maintaining the unity of the true faith in accordance with the objectives of the Synod, called upon Synod's various boards and officers to do their duty and to preserve doctrinal unity and discipline. Conventions did not call for extraordinary action beyond special study and the exercise of discipline at each level. However, it becomes quite evident from a study of the memorials, overtures, and resolutions of the Synod at each convention that the doctrinal difficulties were not being resolved. There is instead an acceleration and intensification of complaints and concerns. The call to follow procedures outlined in the *Handbook* on a routine basis was seemingly not productive of results.

It is also obvious that the major question which faced the Synod had to do with the nature and role of the Holy Scriptures as a source of teaching in the church. All concerned professed allegiance to Article II of the Synod's Constitution, which states that the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments are to be accepted "as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice" and that all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church are to be accepted as "a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God." However, a diversity of opinion centered on the question: "In which way are the Scriptures the Word of God? What is the nature of their authority, and how they are to be properly interpreted?" Thus the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures and their proper interpretation has undoubtedly emerged as the major issue facing The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in the 1960s and 1970s.

President Behnken

A historical study also demonstrates that the most recent past presidents of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod were deeply involved in an attempt to settle these issues and that their efforts centered on the St. Louis Seminary. They acted on the basis of their constitutional duties and out of a desire to keep our church faithful to God's Word.

The sainted Dr. John W. Behnken was concerned about the use of the historical-critical method of Biblical interpretation and in particular about the possibility of individuals using that method to treat Scriptural accounts as "fiction" and "legends." He was concerned also about the parabolic interpretation of Genesis 1 to 11 and the treatment of it as something less than history. He was concerned about the treatment of Messianic prophecies in a way which seemed to detract from references to a personal Messiah to come who would redeem the world from sin and in whom the believers of the Old Testament trusted for their salvation. He was concerned about the necessity of preserving the unity of the Old and the New Testament in the interpretative process, about taking Christ's use

of Scripture seriously, and about a host of Biblical facts which historical critics frequently regard as legends. Beyond this, he was interested in the Missouri Synod preserving a Scriptural viewpoint on fellowship, the lodge, and the understanding and practice of the Lord's Supper.

Because of these concerns Dr. Behnken in 1960 outlined and executed a program of visiting the administrators and faculties of Synod's terminal schools. A record of Dr. Behnken's objectives states that he sought to determine the position of the faculty members with reference to the inspiration of the Scriptures and, in particular, the doctrine of the verbal inspiration and the inerrancy of the Scriptures. It is interesting that President Behnken cited Article XI B of the synodical Constitution as partial justification for his undertaking this task.

On December 1, 1960, President Behnken met with the synodical Vice-Presidents and the Board of Control of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Point 3 of the agenda stated: "Pertinent articles of the By-Laws as they involve the Board of Control in their responsibility in the management of our Seminary in St. Louis. The reading of these articles showed that the President of the Synod is involved and that the President of the Synod cannot escape responsibility. Also that the Board of Control and the President of the institution have a grave responsibility."

President Harms

Dr. Oliver Harms, the immediate Past President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, was likewise concerned about seeking a solution to the theological problems which disturbed the Synod during his administration. In a February 1963 *Memo to My Brethren* Dr. Harms stated:

"Last November also brought the second meeting of the faculties of both seminaries with the College of Presidents. Papers presented in themselves created no difficulties, but they did provoke discussion which brought out the dimensions of the theological problems demanding attention. Old and new, these theological problems harass every Christian body, they cannot be ignored nor can they be resolved by a simple statement.

"Related to many of the questions all of us must study together is the basic doctrine of the authority of the Scriptures. (We will not satisfy our people by acting as if no problems exist. Meanwhile we are committed to teach in accordance with our confessional position.) The relationship between Scripture and the scientific viewpoint is another area that claims attention."

The minutes of the synodical President and Vice-Presidents' meeting on January 12, 1966, also show that Dr. Harms had recently met with the department heads of the St. Louis Seminary faculty. He had "asked for clear statements in answer to accusations brought repeatedly in the area of doctrine against members of the faculty."

Council of Presidents

The synodical Vice-Presidents and the District Presidents also concerned themselves with the doctrinal problems of the Synod on many occasions. Already in January 1963 the minutes of the Council of Presidents report on a conference with the Seminary faculties by saying: "The problems which are troubling the church are not imaginary, a matter of mere semantics; they are very real. The November conference made it clear that the Council of Presidents and the Seminary faculties need to address themselves to these problems with great earnestness."

In September of the following year the Council of Presidents adopted the following resolution: "We request that the President of Synod transmit to President Fuerbringer of the St. Louis faculty our reactions, our consensus, and our concerns at this time." The reactions, consensus, and concerns referred to in the resolution above are based on the studies undertaken in the meeting of April 21—23 and September 1—3 which led to the conviction that the exegetical and hermeneutical principles and approach as presented in the Habel essay are not acceptable and that the theological faculty be held not to use or teach these exegetical and hermeneutical principles and approach as stated in the Habel essay. These reactions and concerns were raised in the statement to the theological faculties adopted in the meeting of the College of Presidents on December 5, 1963, and mailed to Doctors Fuerbringer and Preus on December 12, 1963.

Board of Control of the St. Louis Seminary

The minutes of the Board of Control of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis over the last decade show that the board spent considerable time discussing various

problems concerning the proper interpretation and view of Scripture. Topics include the account of creation, the fall of man as related in Genesis, correct understanding of Old Testament prophecies, the proper interpretation of the Book of Jonah, as well as the entire subject of hermeneutics, or the science of interpreting the Holy Scriptures. In four instances complaints from the church proceeded to the point where formal charges were brought against various professors. In each instance the board met about the matter, but in no instance was a charge of false doctrine sustained against a professor.

During 1965 many persons in the Synod were disturbed by the symbolic interpretation given Genesis 2 and 3 (the fall narrative) by a St. Louis professor. Several pastoral conferences were involved. In a resolution dated May 25, 1965, the pastors of Iowa District West judged this method of interpretation to be unacceptable and asked that its use be terminated.

"Concordia Theological Monthly"

The history of the theological issues that divide the Synod today may also be found by studying the issues of the *Concordia Theological Monthly*, which is edited by the faculty of the St. Louis Seminary. A pronounced shift in position is evident with reference to—

- 1) the inspiration and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures and
- 2) the attitude toward the historical-critical method.

A few examples will suffice to illustrate the change. In 1960, in reviewing a book by Martin J. Heineken, a *CTM* author could state: "A disappointing feature of the book is Heineken's attitude toward the Bible. To him the idea that every sentence of the Bible is true is 'positively frightening.' . . . Apparently he does not recognize Scripture as a form of revelation, but only as a human and fallible record of revelation. This unnecessary and far-reaching concession vitiates much of his work's apologetic value." (*Concordia Theological Monthly*, XXXI, Jan. 1960, p. 71)

Contrast this with the statement written in 1969: "The word 'inspiration' does not by itself tell us anything about the form through which God is speaking; it says only that God speaks. . . . To say the Scripture is inspired, therefore, does not mean necessarily that the Scripture is perfect or not perfect, historical or non-historical." (*Concordia Theological Monthly*, XL, March 1969, p. 160)

Or compare two other statements. In 1957 a *CTM* author reviews a book and says: "In the Old Testament the historicity of most of Genesis, much of the succeeding books, and correspondingly less of the later books is denied or regarded as unimportant. Since, according to the author, the Biblical material is primarily theological, it is improper to regard it as necessarily historical. . . . This sort of 'rediscovery of the Bible' can only leave the humble Bible Christian bewildered and saddened." (*Concordia Theological Monthly*, XXVIII, April 1957, p. 312)

In contrast, in 1965 an author in the *CTM* writes about "the purpose of a particular author. . . . Where the stress is on a religious purpose, his concern with the precise and literal accuracy of concomitant historical or scientific detail may recede into the background." (*Concordia Theological Monthly*, XXXVI, Sept. 1965, p. 592)

The same shift is shown with reference to the historical-critical method. For example, in 1952 an author says, in reviewing a book: "There are many statements in the book with which our readers will not agree, notably in the essay by Dr. W. R. Matthews, Dean of St. Paul's, who reflects essentially the historical-critical approach to the Gospel and to the ancient creeds" (*Concordia Theological Monthly*, XXIII, June 1952, p. 395). Contrast this with the favorable review of a book in the 1957 *CTM*: "In his introduction to Genesis, the author of this Torch Bible Commentary accepts and restates the results of the historico-critical school. . . . The two sources of Genesis 1—11 are J and P. . . . In general, the author has succeeded admirably in what he set out to do—to catch the implication that these parables had for their writer and to communicate his message to us." (*Concordia Theological Monthly*, XXVIII, March 1957, pp. 227-8)

Later Developments Leading to the Appointment of the Fact Finding Committee

This essentially was the situation when the present incumbent took over the office of President of the Synod in the summer of 1969. The President's mail continuously included complaints from the church at large concerning the St. Louis Seminary. These concerned mainly statements by professors in published

articles and in papers delivered at various conferences and positions taken by recent graduates of the Seminary. It became very evident that something had to be done regarding the situation in the interest of settling the issues and in the interest of protecting both the church and the Seminary. It was difficult to separate fact from exaggeration and charges from countercharges. The situation was one of considerable confusion.

Joint Meeting of Faculties and Council of Presidents

At a joint meeting of both Seminary faculties together with the Council of Presidents in late 1969, it became obvious that there were serious disagreements in the way in which members of the faculties understand the authority of the Sacred Scriptures and its implication for Biblical interpretation. In addition, a member of the St. Louis faculty stated that the presuppositions with which certain members of the faculty were approaching the Scriptures were not Lutheran.

"Call to Openness and Trust"

Early in 1970 two incidents took place which convinced the synodical President that something had to be done. The first was the formation of a Committee for Openness and Trust, which issued a "Call to Openness and Trust." The committee included three professors from the St. Louis Seminary. In the February 11, 1970, issue of *Brother to Brother*, the synodical President spoke to the church of his concern about the group. He wrote:

They have ignored the existing Synodical channels and procedures for voicing their concerns and have issued instead a statement in which they establish for themselves a highly dubious confessional stance, call for a new definition of the doctrine of the real presence of the body and blood of our Lord in the Sacrament of the Altar, with a concurrent practice of open Communion, and attack our Synodical stand regarding the inerrancy of Scripture, a subject on which our Synod has spoken clearly and repeatedly.

Make no mistake about this, brothers, what is at stake is not only inerrancy but the Gospel of Jesus Christ itself, the authority of Holy Scripture, the 'quia' subscription to the Lutheran Confessions, and perhaps the very continued existence of Lutheranism as a confessional confessing movement in the Christian world.

Subsequently, at the Milwaukee convention of the Synod in July 1971, the Synod resolved to "repudiate the inadequacies of 'A Call to Openness and Trust'"; it further resolved that "the Synod admonish all those who have disturbed the Synod by circularizing this document"; and it finally resolved: "That the Synod ask those who are publicly identified with this document to publicly assure the Synod through the office of the President of the Synod that they are faithful to the confessional stance of the Synod and repudiate the inadequacies pointed out by the CTCR" (*Proceedings*, 1971, p. 128, Resolution 2-50). Attached to the resolution is a statement by three seminary professors who indicate that the document did not represent a denial or a limitation of their confessional loyalty and was not to be regarded as "a personal confession of faith for all who subscribed to it."

Concern of Systematics Departments

In March 1970 the synodical President received a communication in the form of the minutes of a joint meeting of the Departments of Systematic Theology of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield. With only two negative votes and one abstention the professors of the systematics departments of the Synod's two seminaries had declared that they believed an essay by a St. Louis Seminary professor which had been published and distributed by the church undermined the authority of the apostolic Word, confused Law and Gospel in the direction of antinomianism,* and used principles of the New Hermeneutic uncritically. This posed an additional crisis for the President of the Synod in that responsible theologians within the Synod had judged an exegetical essay in such a manner. Obviously, this served to heighten the pressure to take definitive action which would bring a solution to the problems in this area.**

* Antinomianism: the position that under the Gospel dispensation the moral law is of no use or obligation because faith alone is necessary to salvation.

** To date no action has been taken by the administration of the St. Louis Seminary relative to this problem.

Intraseminary Concern

For a considerable period of time the synodical President had been aware of the concern of a significant number of St. Louis Seminary faculty members over the doctrinal stance of many of their colleagues.

This knowledge was reenforced by receipt on April 9, 1970, of a letter from a member of the faculty. The letter stated that Concordia Seminary confronted the question as to whether it was to continue to be a conservative Lutheran Seminary or not. The professor expressed grave concerns over certain theological and curricular trends at the Seminary. He stated that it was really a matter for the Synod to decide if the Seminary was to strike out in a new direction. To facilitate bringing this matter to the attention of the church, he proposed the appointment of a committee of inquiry.

Decision to Act

As a result of these many factors the synodical President became convinced that in order to remedy the situation he would need to exercise his constitutional responsibilities in a direct fashion. Accordingly he announced to the St. Louis Seminary Board of Control in a letter on April 20, 1970, that he had decided to appoint a Fact Finding Committee. The document addressed to the board reads in part as follows:

For several years, many in our fellowship have been disturbed by departures from our Synod's doctrinal position on the part of individuals serving in various capacities within our church. Individuals and boards continue to receive requests from individuals, congregations, conferences, and even entire Districts, to deal constructively with the situation. Although officials and boards have no doubt made sincere efforts through the years to remedy the situation, the problem seems to be increasing instead of decreasing.

Events in recent months have convinced me that my constitutional responsibility as President requires that I take decisive action on this matter. I consider such action necessary to help the members and institutions in Synod remain faithful to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions, to assist the Synod in the achievement of the purpose for which it was organized, and to protect the workers in institutions of the Synod from unfounded or unjust allegations.

In view of the responsibilities placed upon me and pursuant to the powers granted in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod (see especially Article XI, B, 1-4; Bylaw 2.29b), I am appointing a Fact Finding Committee.

This Committee is directly responsible to the President of the Synod. Specific assignments will be given to the Committee only by the President, to whom the Committee will present its findings and recommendations.

The Board of Control was informed that the synodical President was directing the committee to begin its work with Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, because of its strategic importance for the life and work of the Synod. He called upon the board to ask the Seminary community to cooperate with the committee in every possible way.

Commission on Constitutional Matters

At the same time the synodical President approached the Commission on Constitutional Matters of the Synod, indicating that he had decided to appoint a Fact Finding Committee and inquiring whether the President was acting within his constitutional rights and responsibilities in appointing such a Fact Finding Committee. The commission responded in the affirmative in a letter dated April 29, 1970.

Preparatory Meetings

On May 15, as a result of a conversation with Dr. John Tietjen, president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, the synodical President stated that he would attempt to carry out the contemplated interviews not through a fact finding committee, as proposed, but personally with the help of the Vice-Presidents and other resource people.

On July 6 the synodical President met with the president and vice-president of the Seminary, the President of the Missouri District, the Secretary of the Synod, and five professors serving as department chairmen of the Seminary. The purpose was to discuss ground rules for the planned inquiry.

In a May 14, 1970, issue of the *Concordia Seminary News*, President Tietjen released the public statement that he welcomed the inquiry on two grounds: "First, it will demonstrate how truly Lutheran we are. . . . Second, it will help our church

clarify what it really means to be Lutheran." However, he also stated: "I regret that Dr. Preus has chosen to dignify the accusations of the Seminary by conducting an investigation. The Constitution and Bylaws of our church body provide adequate procedures for those who have questions to raise or charges to make. An inquiry by the President of the Synod is not at all necessary."

A similar position was taken by Dr. Tietjen in the Summer 1970 issue of *Seminary Newsletter: (Alumni Bulletin)*: "The President of the Synod has made it plain that he is only asking questions, not making accusations, that he hopes and prays to find everything in order at our school. But the very fact that he has chosen to undertake an investigation in response to unspecified charges against unnamed faculty members has led people—the press included—to assume there must be something in the charges." He went on to say: "Convention after convention of our Synod has endorsed the past performance of the Board of Control by turning down requests for special investigations and calling on members of the Synod to follow procedures specified in the *Handbook*." This alumni letter was thus the second public pronouncement in which President Tietjen indicated his unhappiness with the Seminary inquiry.

Fact Finding Committee Appointed

By this time the proposed inquiry at the Seminary had received adverse attention on a national basis and was being billed as a "heresy trial." Largely because of this fact as well as the public stand taken by the president of the St. Louis Seminary, the synodical President wrote the Board of Control on September 9 that he was abandoning the plan to carry out the investigation personally and that in the interest of objectivity and fairness he was reverting to the procedure he had originally proposed, namely, appointing a committee to handle the work.

After consultation with the Vice-Presidents of the Synod on the basis of Bylaw 2.27h and also 2.29c, he appointed the following to serve as a Fact Finding Committee for the St. Louis Seminary: the Reverend Karl Barth, President, South Wisconsin District, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Dr. Elmer Foelber, former House Editor, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri; Dr. Armin Moellering, Grace Lutheran Church, Palisades Park, New Jersey (English District); Dr. Paul Streufert, Fourth Vice-President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Rocky River, Ohio; and Dr. Paul Zimmerman, President, Concordia Lutheran Junior College, Ann Arbor, Michigan, Chairman.

The committee was made directly responsible to the President of the Synod and was authorized to include in its work any aspects of the Seminary's doctrine and life which seemed to require their attention.

Because many had questioned whether such a procedure reflected the spirit of genuine Lutheranism, the President of the Synod closed his letter of September 9, 1970, to the Board of Control with a quotation from the Preface to the *Book of Concord* signed by the Lutheran princes. The Confessors stated:

... we are minded by the grace of the Holy Spirit to abide and remain unanimously in this confession of faith and to regulate all religious controversies and their explanations according to it. In addition, we have resolved and purpose to live in genuine peace and concord with our fellow-members ... and to demonstrate toward everyone, according to his station, all affection, service, and friendship.

We likewise purpose to cooperate with one another in the future in the implementation of this effort at concord in our lands, according to our own and each community's circumstances, through diligent visitation of churches and schools, the supervision of printers, and other salutary means. If the current controversies about our Christian religion should continue or new ones arise, we shall see to it that they are settled and composed in timely fashion before they become dangerously widespread in order that all kinds of scandal might be obviated. (Tappert Edition, p. 14)

Board of Control Concurs

On September 22, 1970, the synodical President received a letter from the president of the St. Louis Seminary indicating that the Board of Control had resolved to concur with the decision of the synodical President that there should be a fact-finding investigation of the Seminary. However, it was the board's opinion that the Board of Control itself should conduct the investigation for the synodical President. An invitation was extended to the President of the Synod to meet with the Board on October 19, 1970.

Constitutionality Upheld

Because of continued objections that the President did not have the constitutional right to appoint a committee to conduct an inquiry into the doctrinal situation of the Synod, with particular reference to the St. Louis Seminary, the synodical President on September 30, 1970, once again brought the matter before the synodical Commission on Constitutional Matters. Dr. Tietjen and Dr. Ahlschwede, Executive Secretary of the Board for Higher Education, were requested by the synodical President to appear before the commission.

The Commission on Constitutional Matters once again upheld the constitutionality of the procedure suggested by the President, stating in conclusion: "After giving full consideration to the objections raised, the Commission on Constitutional Matters finds that these objections have no validity, and hereby reaffirms its earlier opinion that the President of the Synod is within his constitutional rights, if he deems it advisable, in appointing such a Fact Finding Committee." (October 2, 1970)

Milwaukee Convention Approval

Subsequently the synodical convention, meeting in Milwaukee, July 9-16, 1971, passed a resolution affirming the opinion of the Commission on Constitutional Matters with reference to the Fact Finding Committee (*Proceedings*, 1971, pp. 165-6, Resolution 5-26). The convention in Milwaukee also passed a resolution supporting the judgment of the President in appointing a Fact Finding Committee:

Resolved, That the Synod commend the President for his pastoral concern for doctrinal unity and purity and support his judgment and action in appointing a fact-finding committee; and be it also

Resolved, That the Synod decline those overtures which challenge the President's judgment and action in appointing a fact-finding committee. (*Proceedings*, 1971, p. 120, Resolution 2-23)

Procedures of the Fact Finding Committee

The President of the Synod met with the Board of Control of Concordia Seminary in October 1970 to discuss his proposed inquiry. As a result of this meeting the board resolved: "In response to the decision by President Preus that the Fact Finding Committee inquire into the doctrine and life of Concordia Seminary, the Board of Control stands ready to cooperate with the special committee which the President of the Synod has appointed to function in his behalf." The board then added five concerns which it had relative to the fact-finding process and the manner in which it should be carried out. On October 23 the President of the Synod addressed a letter to the Board of Control, agreeing with the greater part of its recommendations relative to the manner in which the Fact Finding Committee should function.

Faculty Statements

On November 3, 1970, the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, published a *Declaration* reaffirming their ordination vows and seeking "to reassure the members of the Synod concerning the confessional position of the faculty." This was accompanied by a minority statement of explanation signed by five faculty members which stated: "We are convinced that there are basic theological differences within the faculty, including matters pertaining both to the interpretation of Holy Scripture and to the meaning of confessional subscription in the Lutheran Church. In the present context we believe that the *Declaration*, by its failure to call attention to the existence of such differences, will be seriously misunderstood by our Synod." The *Declaration* of November 3, 1970, is found as Appendix IA of this report; the minority statement of five faculty members is found as Appendix IB. These statements were carried in the *Lutheran Witness Reporter* dated November 15, 1970.

Ground Rules

The Fact Finding Committee itself had its initial meeting with President Tietjen on October 2, 1970, at which time it discussed ground rules for the interviews with the faculty members. It also requested that the Seminary president have available various materials, including past copies of the catalog, student publications, faculty bulletins, course outlines, copies of essays delivered, bib-

liographies of the writings of the individual professors, graduate examinations and answers, etc. The purpose of the extensive list of materials was to give the members of the Fact Finding Committee an opportunity to obtain information above and beyond that available from the interviews with the professors. The committee also met with President Tietjen and three faculty representatives on November 12 to continue the discussion of procedures. The committee spent time also on November 13 visiting classes.

The date for beginning the interviewing of professors was set for December 11-12. It was agreed to interview professors for a period of approximately one hour and 45 minutes to two hours with the interview to be taken down on a tape recorder and a transcript to be furnished the president of the Seminary, who was present at all interviews, the professor interviewed, and the members of the committee. The president of the Seminary also recorded the interviews and furnished the professor with a tape recording. It was furthermore agreed that each professor could bring along a friend or counsel as he desired.

On November 24 the Seminary faculty adopted another statement entitled *The Gospel, Our Confession, and Doctrinal Statements*. It is found in this report as Appendix II. This statement is analyzed in the body of the discussion of the Fact Finding Report which follows. It bears on the faculty's stance over against the binding nature of synodically adopted doctrinal statements.

The Interviews

The faculty interviews by the Fact Finding Committee continued from December 11, 1970, through March 6, 1971. And then on November 19 and 20, 1971, interviews were held with four professors who were on leave at the time of the Fact Finding Committee activity.

A Joint Statement on Agreement on Procedure

The interviews proceeded in the spirit of brotherly love without any unpleasantness. However, certain faculty concerns about the interviews led to the faculty writing an open letter to the President of the Synod, dated January 5, 1971, and printed in the January 1971 *Seminary Newsletter*. It was quoted extensively in the January 17, 1971, *Reporter*.^{*} As a consequence, meetings were held on February 6 and 20, and March 6, 1971, involving the President of the Synod, his Fact Finding Committee, a special faculty committee, and the President and Vice-President of Academic Affairs of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

A formal statement was mutually agreed upon and was announced in the *Lutheran Witness Reporter*, March 21, 1971, and reads as follows:

In the interest of mutual understanding, fraternal relations, and the prosperity of the church of Jesus Christ, we affirm an agreement on the following topics which have been an object of concern in connection with the seminary inquiry.

The instructions of the president of the Synod to his fact-finding committee are as follows:

1. The fact-finding committee will explore the confessional position of faculty members on the basis of Article II of the constitution of the Synod, namely, that the Holy Scriptures as the written Word of God are the only rule and norm of faith and practice and that the Lutheran Confessions are a correct exposition of the Word of God. Any questions that contribute to this exploration are suitable.

Article II of the synodical constitution will serve as the sole criterion by which the fact-finding committee will assemble facts for report to the president of the Synod and as the sole criterion by which the president of the Synod will make a judgment about the facts reported to him.

Since synodically adopted doctrinal statements seek to bring Scripture to bear on various topics, they too may be the subject of questions, limited however by the terms of Resolution 2-27 of the Synod's Denver convention. It is agreed that all such doctrinal statements stand under the Holy Scriptures and the Confessions.

2. The fact-finding committee will not request or receive statements by a faculty member about the doctrinal position of a colleague, either by name or anonymously, or about the faculty in general or a portion of it. Such testimony, if necessary, is to be made in accordance with the provisions of the synodical *Handbook*, beginning within the seminary community. The fact-finding com-

^{*} A detailed answer to the January 5, 1971, resolution and letter of the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, was printed in the February 7 issue of the "Lutheran Witness Reporter."

mittee may ask faculty members about theological issues, including issues on which their colleagues may also hold positions of their own. However, the faculty member being interviewed is to be asked only about his own position.

This agreement is without prejudice with reference to the action of the fact-finding committee in receiving the statement of a particular faculty member. Because of the campus situation his statement has been forwarded by the fact-finding committee to President Preus for submission to the Board of Control.

3. The synodical president, the fact-finding committee, and the faculty advisory committee will meet again in the event the need arises.

Report to the Synodical President

The Fact Finding Committee submitted its report to the synodical President on June 15, 1971. The definitive report of the Fact Finding Committee is made up of the transcripts of the interviews with the professors, together with references to their writings. In addition, the committee prepared a summary of the interviews with each professor as well as a general summary of all the interviews. This general summary was for the use of the synodical President and the Board of Control in finding their way through the voluminous transcripts and identifying issues which they might wish to study more closely and could be regarded as an expanded index.

It should be noted at this point that in preparing this present report to the Synod, your President has incorporated large sections from the transcripts submitted by the Fact Finding Committee. The large volume of the total record of the interviews precludes printing the transcripts and therefore the report itself in their entirety. However, the sections given constitute an adequate sample of the testimony on points at issue.

The letter of transmittal of the Fact Finding Committee to the synodical President is included at this point inasmuch as it provides a comprehensive picture of the activity of the committee.

June 15, 1971
Ann Arbor, Michigan

The Honorable Jacob A. O. Preus, President
The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod
210 North Broadway
Saint Louis, Missouri 63102

Dear Mr. President:

The Fact Finding Committee appointed by you to explore doctrine and life at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, herewith tenders its report.

The committee held its first interviews on December 11, 1970, and continued thereafter until the completion of the interviews on March 6, 1971. All men of faculty rank were interviewed with the exception of Messrs. Habel, Sauer, and Walter J. Bartling, who were on leave. The committee intends to complete its work by interviewing these men in the fall. In addition, Prof. K. Siess was not interviewed. In the light of his recent recovery from an illness the committee deemed it advisable to excuse him. Prof. Victor Bartling was interviewed. However, a defective tape rendered the typing of a transcript difficult. Hence his name is not among those on whom a report is given.

The committee conducted interviews with forty-five men. The committee also explored both published and unpublished writings of the professors. This literature often served as sources for questions in the interview. In addition the committee examined class syllabi, the seminary catalog, recent copies of student publications, and copies of comprehensive examinations given by the Graduate School. Various members of the committee also visited classes and attended chapel on occasion.

In view of anxiety and charges broadcast through the church it is noteworthy that at no point in any interview did any man being interviewed object that a question addressed to him was unethical in that it asked him to inform on or criticize an absent colleague.

It is to be recognized that a full scale survey of an educational institution is a major activity. With one exception, all members of the committee carried full

work loads simultaneously, plus other synodical assignments. Nevertheless, the committee spent a great deal of time on the process, far more than the Synodical President or the members of the Board of Control themselves could have probably applied to the project. While the report undoubtedly contains flaws, it is our opinion that we are passing on to you a report which presents a rather detailed profile of the doctrinal stance of the men of the Seminary faculty.

Each professor received his own copy of the tape of the interview. Each man also received an uncorrected typed transcript of his interview. The president of the seminary also received these records. The committee worked from these transcripts and the tapes also where problems in transcription seemed evident. For the most part we believe the transcripts to be reliable. However, in case of a disputed passage, the master tapes are available.

Through the Seminary president the committee invited men who wished to change or supplement their interview responses to submit the same to the committee. Three men responded by way of supplement. Their letters are a part of this report.

The committee is mindful of the Synodical President's instructions to report on the basis of topics related to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. We believe that our questions centered on items related to Scripture and the Confessions. If we err in this respect, you will know how to make the appropriate correction. It may be mentioned that any item found in Scripture in our opinion is a legitimate subject for inquiry.

A word about the topic of Synodical Doctrinal Statements is necessary. You will note that the interviews spend little time on this topic. These items generally were touched on under the category of the teaching of the Scriptures. However, on November 24, 1970, the faculty issued its statement relative to its majority position on confessional commitment and on additional doctrinal statements. This statement plus personal views on the subject are included in the report that you may know the position of the faculty on the interplay of the Holy Scriptures, the Confessions, and additional statements by the Synod. It is helpful to know what the professors see as their commitment to God and the church.

We are mindful of your instructions to collect facts. It has been said that such an inquiry could not be made without sitting in judgment on any individual or group. However, the committee specifically disclaims any judgmental function in making its report. The responsibility for judging lies elsewhere. If an item or items are highlighted in the report, it is to aid you in assimilating the mass of information, in distinguishing the particular answers from the general responses. If an item is highlighted, that does not bring the inference that it is good or bad, orthodox or heterodox. The observations and questions included in them serve the purpose of pointing to areas of theological sensitivity in our circles today. There is no implication of judgment in asking the questions; nor are either positive or negative answers implied. The full report contains the transcripts of the interviews. The transcripts are the definitive report. To aid you in your study of the report, the committee has prepared a summary of each man's interviews. As time permitted, an addendum consisting of a summary of articles or books was prepared and attached to some summaries. No significance is to be inferred from its absence or presence. It merely represents an attempt to present a fuller picture.

Each summary presents certain "observations." These are not judgments, but merely represent an attempt to highlight the material for you. Questions are also asked regarding various issues. No answers by the committee are implied. The summaries are merely an introduction to the full transcript of the interview where you will find each statement in its complete context.

You will note that not every professor was asked the same questions. The committee felt it ought to avoid a stereotyped form of interview. It believed that from a more spontaneous exchange of question and answer would come a better picture of the professor's doctrinal stance. Also certain questions were derived from the writings of a man as well as from his field of specialization. Yet, the committee believes that in most instances a rather complete view of a man's stance appeared. This goal was aided by the committee's invitation to each man to begin his interview with a statement of his confessional stance. This involved in most cases a confession of the personal faith of the professor.

In addition to the summaries of the interviews you will find other items: a report on class visits, a report on certain spontaneous conversations with students, a review of certain syllabi in the exegetical department, a brief note concerning course descriptions found in the catalogs, a review of recent issues of the *Spectrum* and *Seminarian*, etc. None of these are as complete as the committee would like. However, they do complement the interviews and in several instances reinforce information derived from the interviews.

In addition we have prepared a General Summary of our findings. To a large extent it is in the words of the professors themselves. If you find in it items of interest, the committee refers you to the full context of the transcript of the interview or the article quoted. But the committee believes that it has presented a fair picture of the interview.

Finally, the General Summary has been condensed to a two column table of varying positions. Your committee has found that there are divergent positions held on many items. As the individual summaries will show, these divergent positions sometimes involve larger numbers of professors, sometimes smaller. Perhaps divergent positions are acceptable on various items of doctrine and/or theology. Perhaps they present a serious problem for an institution training future Lutheran pastors. Again we do not presume to judge. We merely point out the facts of the situation.

Finally we call to your attention the fact that we on an earlier occasion sent you as part of our report a statement by one professor. This then is the second report to you. God willing, in the fall a final supplement will report on the three professors who were on leave this year.

As the committee pens these final words, we have recently celebrated the glorious festival of Pentecost. Our Lord has asked us to be His witnesses to the end of the earth. He has fulfilled and still fulfills the promise of the Holy Spirit to give power to the proclamation of His Word and the administration of His Sacraments. The angels on the Mount of the Ascension said He will come again. We pray that our Synod will be found faithful up to the final day. In this spirit your committee accepted its assignment to speak with brethren concerning Christ's Word, work, and mission. In the spirit of those who strive to be faithful we conversed with brethren concerning their call to train Christian ministers of Word and Sacrament. In this spirit the men responded in the interviews. We live and work in a church that considers the Word of God with its message of man's guilt and God's grace to be vital for our age and whatever years are left before Christ comes again. We sincerely believe that the activity of the Fact Finding Committee will under God's grace be a blessing to The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod.

Respectfully submitted,

Karl L. Barth
Elmer E. Foelber
H. Armin Moellering
Paul W. Streufert
Paul A. Zimmerman

Upon receipt of the Fact-Finding Committee report in June 1971, the synodical President immediately transmitted it to President Tietjen and to the members of the Board of Control.

The Milwaukee Convention

At the Milwaukee convention in July 1971 there was considerable discussion in the floor committee on theological matters and in the convention sessions concerning the timing of the release of the Fact-Finding Committee report to the Synod. It was agreed, however, that it was necessary to give the Board of Control opportunity to review the report and to take action if that seemed desirable. Accordingly the Synod adopted Resolution 2-28, which reads:

Whereas, The President of the Synod has submitted the report of the fact-finding committee to the Board of Control of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.;
and

Whereas, The Synod is desirous that a conclusion be brought about by the Holy Spirit under the Word of God; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod direct the Board of Control to take appropriate action on the basis of the report, commending or correcting where necessary; and be it further

Resolved, That the Board of Control report progress directly to the President of the Synod and the Board for Higher Education; and be it finally

Resolved, That the President of the Synod report to the Synod on the progress of the Board of Control within one year. (*Proceedings*, 1971, p.122)

Board of Control

On September 20, 1971, the synodical President and the chairman of the Fact-Finding Committee met with the Board of Control and gave them an opportunity to ask questions concerning the Fact Finding Committee report. In a letter of October 4, 1971, the synodical President suggested that in the interviews which he believed the Board of Control to be planning with professors, tape recordings be used to take down the entire conversation in the interest of preventing misunderstandings and assuring fair documentation. This suggestion was reiterated in a letter of November 2, 1971. The board declined this suggestion.* It did, however, resolve to invite the President to attend any meeting in which it holds interviews with faculty members. Only one such interview was held based on the fact-finding report, and the synodical President was not present.

It is important to mention also that on March 3, 1972, the synodical President issued a pastoral letter to the members of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod: congregations, pastors, and teachers. This dealt with the situation involving the reappointment of Professor Arlis Ehlen. For reasons discussed in the letter of March 3, the synodical President considered it important to send this communication as a partial discharge of his duty under Milwaukee convention Resolution 2-28. A copy of this letter is included in this report as Appendix III.

In the same letter he explained his reasons for issuing *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*. Noting that the document was not intended to be "a new standard of orthodoxy," the President observed that he was providing these guidelines for the Board of Control and for the Synod as a tool to identify theological and doctrinal issues which the Synod needs to consider and resolve.

The six topics treated in the *Statement* reflect the major issues discussed in the committee's interviews with the professors. In each of these areas the *Statement* presents a brief summary paragraph which attempts to state what the Synod affirms, as well as a number of short statements expressing views which contradict that position. These antithetical statements include many of the specific issues discussed in the interviews and in several instances reflect questions and concerns about faculty members expressed within the Synod in recent years. They were included in the *Statement* to give the faculty every opportunity to reject any views for which they may have been unjustly criticized. The *Statement* was intended to facilitate the task of the Board of Control as it dealt with the professors on the basis of several hundred pages of interview transcripts. It was shared with the church not only to provide information on which issues were under discussion but to offer guidance in applying Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions to those issues.

A copy of *A Statement* is provided in this report as Appendix IV. Cross references to *A Statement* are included in the main body of this report with reference to the position held by various seminary professors.

The Board of Control made no use of *A Statement* except to receive it and to ask the faculty to respond to it. The faculty *Response* came on April 4, 1972. It indicated that the faculty did not consider the positions rejected in *A Statement* to be descriptive of its teaching. The faculty also attacked the procedure of issuing *A Statement* as "improper." Beyond this the faculty majority declared that "*A Statement* has a spirit alien to Lutheran Confessional Theology," that it makes "binding dogma out of mere theological opinion," and that it is "inadequate theologically." The faculty *Response* amounted to what was regarded by many as a scathing denunciation of *A Statement*. At least the *Response* must be accepted at face value as an accurate reflection of the attitude of the faculty as such. This has grave implications.

* The Board of Control did, however, record on tape their meetings with the faculty minority which protested the theological position of the president and the majority of the faculty. In this there seemed to be a degree of inconsistency.

MORE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Meeting with Faculty

On May 17, 1972, the synodical President met with the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He presented to them a list of thirteen theological and doctrinal concerns which issued from the data given in the Fact-Finding Committee report.

He then presented five requests to the administration and faculty of the seminary. They were:

1. A request to the Seminary president for an appraisal of the concerns listed by the synodical President and for a report on what ministering the seminary president may have carried out with faculty members involved in matters of doctrinal concern. President Tietjen was also asked to inform the synodical President of his own personal position on the controverted issues.

2. A request to the faculty members to respond individually to the theses and antitheses in *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*.

3. A request for a special and extensive dialog between the two factions on the faculty in an effort to spell out areas of doctrinal and theological agreement and disagreement.

4. A request for a statement of the faculty's position over against Resolutions 2-21 and 5-24 of the Milwaukee convention (1971) dealing with the status of synodically adopted doctrinal statements and resolutions.

5. A request for complete frankness and clarity in expressing theological positions.

These requests of the synodical President were made in the interest of clarifying all of the issues involved and of moving toward a resolution of them on the basis of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions and in the spirit of Christian love.

The faculty responded to these requests on May 30. They implied that the synodical President could expect no answer or positive response from the Seminary president until the synodical President had himself talked to each individual concerning the controverted theological positions. Thus a negative answer was given. President Tietjen's own answer is to be found in Appendix VIc. He declined to comment on the issues, saying that this is now a responsibility of the Board of Control. He also said that he had "assured himself through personal discussion that members of the faculty are not teaching contrary to their confessional commitment."

The request to provide individual responses to *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* was answered with a firm negative.

The request for a dialog between dissenting factions of the faculty was answered with a negative conditioned by a promise to discuss issues in the fall, when the new academic year begins.

The request to speak clearly and openly was answered in the affirmative.

The request relative to Milwaukee Resolutions 2-21 and 5-24 was answered with several paragraphs culminating in the following:

We therefore view also the Milwaukee Resolutions 2-21 and 5-24 as adding nothing to the obligatory confession of the members of the Synod and as included under Resolution 2-04 of New York. We are mindful of the plea of several conventions beseeching the members of the Synod "by the mercies of God to honor and uphold the doctrinal content of synodically adopted doctrinal statements." Certainly no one should disparage or ridicule such statements nor impugn their legitimacy, but all members of the Synod should respect them, study them, learn from them, and (in the words of Milwaukee 2-21, quoting Denver 2-27) not "give them more or less status than they deserve." We are aware of the distinction made in Milwaukee 5-24 between convention resolutions concerning doctrine and more formal statements adopted after study and discussion throughout the Synod. We are also aware of provisions for registering criticism of the latter type of statements and for seeking changes in them. We expect to act accordingly.

The Seminary faculty also indicated a desire to discuss matters further with the synodical President. However, it is important to note that the requests of the synodical President were substantially denied by the faculty.

This was the official response of the faculty. It should be noted, however, that five members of the faculty, in a statement submitted to the President on June 1, 1972, accepted his request for individual responses to his *Statement*, stated their willingness "to participate in any program that may be devised to bring about a serious faculty study of the theological issues with which the *Statement* deals,

and expressed appreciation for "the fairness and kindness with which the Seminary has been treated by President Preus and the Fact-Finding Committee throughout the investigation." Their statement also notes that "every member of this faculty has been given ample opportunity to demonstrate that his teaching is in agreement with the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions."

Report of the Board of Control

The Board of Control submitted its report concerning the Fact Finding Committee report and its activities relative to it on June 22, 1972. It is entitled "Progress Report of the Board of Control of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, to the President of the Synod and to the Board for Higher Education in Response to the Directive of the Synod in Milwaukee Convention, Resolution 2-28." This report is printed later in this document together with other pertinent material.

Throughout the year in which the Board of Control had before it the Fact Finding Committee report, considerable difference of opinion developed within the board itself, both as to procedures to be followed and as to the theological and doctrinal issues involved. This is evident in that the board's report was not supported unanimously by the membership of the board. Indeed, two members of the board submitted a dissenting opinion to the synodical President. Another wrote a letter expressing inability to agree with the majority report. In the interest of full disclosure to the church of the situation and out of respect for the consciences of the men involved, these documents are also included in the synodical President's Report to the Synod, together with an analysis.

3. A SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

What did the research of the Fact Finding Committee reveal about the theological stance of the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis? The pages that follow this section spell out the findings with full documentation from the interviews and the writings of the professors.

Those who read this report, both within and without The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, will appraise the theological stance by their own norms. Hence it is to be expected that the appraisals will vary. But the Synod will judge by its own time-honored norms, the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. It can not do otherwise.

We praise and thank God that we can report that our church has been spared many of the theological aberrations that plague Christendom today. The Fact Finding Committee found no evidence that any professor at the seminary teaches false doctrine concerning such great doctrines as the Trinity, the deity of Christ, justification by faith, or the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, etc. It is well known that there are theologians in our world who no longer affirm these Biblical doctrines.

The Synod can also praise God that every member of this faculty affirms the primacy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, professes acceptance of the authority of Holy Scripture, and claims allegiance to the Lutheran Confessions. Although there are some serious differences and problems within the faculty in understanding what such affirmations mean, the Synod should not fail to note with appreciation that its seminary faculty continues to make such affirmations with complete unanimity.

Moreover, the Fact Finding Committee discovered no false teaching on the part of one man who had been accused unofficially of an unbiblical position on the atonement wrought for us by Christ. It had the same experience with another professor who earlier had been the center of controversy regarding his teachings concerning the state of the soul after death. For this, too, we give thanks to God.

The Fact Finding Committee found no evidence of what is frequently referred to as fundamentalism. Nor was there any evidence of biblicism. No one insisted that the literary types of the Bible were to be ignored. No one insisted that every passage must be interpreted literally without reference to such items as metaphor, poetic form, or apocalyptic expressions. Nor was there any professor who held or implied that the Bible is an end in itself to be interpreted and revered for its own sake. All agreed that the purpose of the Bible is as described by the apostle Paul, "From childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." (2 Tim. 3:15-16)

However, the Fact Finding Committee did report a number of items which are a matter of grave concern to the Synod.

The findings indicate a distressing amount of diversity in the theological positions of various members of the faculty. The table immediately following this section lists divergent positions held by the members of the faculty. Some of the positions are representative of the doctrinal stance of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod. Others represent significant departures from the position of the Synod. This fact alone is a matter of grave concern in a church body which from its inception has insisted on unity of doctrine and practice.

There are those who assert that the Synod no longer need insist on doctrinal unity in all articles of faith. There are also voices that seek to distinguish between divergences in theology and differences in doctrine. Regardless of debate concerning these points, it is the conviction of your President that the report of the Fact Finding Committee presents matters of serious doctrinal concern that call for decisive action on the part of the Synod and its officers. These matters are summarized in the paragraphs that follow. Detailed documentation follows later in this report to the Synod.

A False View of the Holy Scriptures

Within the faculty the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures is subverted to the point where, in effect, a false doctrine is proclaimed regarding them. The faculty does indeed proclaim its allegiance to the Scriptures as the primary norm of Christian doctrine. However, in fact, the majority hold a view of the Scriptures which in practice erodes the authority of Holy Writ. Verbal inspiration, as it is commonly understood in the Synod, is not taught by all. The inerrancy of the Scriptures is severely limited. The Gospel (the primary teaching of the Scripture) is regarded as virtually exclusively normative in such a way as to detract from the normative authority of the whole Scripture. This is sometimes called "Gospel Reductionism."

We are grateful that there is proclamation of the pure Gospel at the St. Louis Seminary, but there is also in some instances lack of clarity as to just what is the Gospel. The teachings concerning the fruits of the Gospel (such as good works or social action) are on occasion confused with the Gospel itself (God's proclamation of grace in Jesus Christ).

Many members of the faculty, and the administration and exegetical department, are fully committed to the use of the historical-critical method as a valid and preferred method for the interpretation of the Bible. The administration and faculty claim to have purged the method of its negative aspects by the use of "Lutheran presuppositions." However, the evidence gathered by the Fact Finding Committee indicates that the essentials of the historical-critical method as used elsewhere are also adhered to at the St. Louis Seminary.

The majority of the St. Louis exegetes allow the possibility that many of the Old and New Testament stories are not really historical (the events recorded may not have happened; the people named in some instances may never have existed).

This approach is linked with a subjective application of an otherwise legitimate interpretive principle that one must determine the *intent* of a writer. This truism is abused by the assertion that a historical account need not be regarded as historical unless the interpreter decides it was the Biblical author's intent to present a historical account. Since the Biblical writers seldom spell out all that they intend, this approach leaves the door open for interpretations that in effect do not take seriously much of the historic content of the Scriptures. Christianity is a historical religion that is based in large part on events that happened in time and takes seriously the significance of God's mighty acts for His people. Diminution of the factuality of the accounts of the Bible not only undermines the authority of the Bible as the infallible norm for faith and life but also has serious implications for the historical nature of the Gospel itself. Theological statements based on events that allegedly in many instances really never took place represent an abandonment of what has been axiomatic in Christian theology throughout the ages.

Closely related is the attitude of the majority of the faculty exegetes toward the miracles related in the Old and the New Testament. Faculty members were unanimous in rejecting a naturalistic theology that denies miracles on principle. The faculty grants that miracles may have taken place. However, many of the men view as legitimate such interpretative approaches as regard miracle stories as nonhistorical, i. e., as literary devices used only to make a theological point. Thus again the seminary faculty follows the example of ordinary practitioners of the historical-critical method who consistently downgrade the actuality of the Biblical miracle accounts.

Again, in a similar manner the faculty believes that the Gospel accounts of the words of Jesus are to be taken seriously. However, some exegetes accept as legitimate interpretative procedure the practice of stating that many of the words attributed to Jesus in the Gospels were in fact never spoken by Him but were later additions or "interpretations" made by the Christian "community" after the death of Jesus. Such professors claim that this view does not detract from the authority of the words put in Jesus' mouth. In fact, however, by allowing the questioning of the authenticity of the Gospel accounts these faculty members in effect accept a typical historical-critical methodology which erodes the historicity and truthfulness of the Biblical account.

Once again, in the area of the unity of the Old and New Testaments the majority of the faculty exegetes follow typical historical-critical methodology. The Lutheran Confessions regard the Old Testament Messianic prophecies as pointing to Christ both directly and typically. They also assert that the Old Testament patriarchs were saved by faith in a Messiah who was to come. Some members of the St. Louis faculty apparently do not share that position. The majority of the Old Testament exegetes recognize few or no direct Old Testament prophecies as

pointing directly to Christ. Most regard the Old Testament Messianic prophecies as pointing to someone living in the day of the prophet, usually a king in the line of David. Only by application later does the New Testament then, according to their view, connect these with Jesus of Nazareth.

Moreover, such interpreters commonly assert that the Old Testament believers then were not saved by a belief in a Christ who was to come but simply by a belief in the general goodness and forgiveness of God.

Once again such interpreters at the seminary also follow the ordinary historical-critical approach, which minimizes the presence of predictive prophecy in the Old Testament. The professors do not challenge that God could have allowed His prophets to look into the future and perceive Christ across the centuries. They do, however, usually deny that He did give His prophets that vision. The New Testament evidence in support of predictive Messianic prophecy is generally not accepted at its face value.

The Fact Finding Committee did not discuss the Biblical teaching concerning angels except in two instances. It is noteworthy that in at least one of these instances it encountered an unwillingness to affirm or deny the existence of angels as personal beings and of a personal Satan. This attitude also is consonant with the naturalistic accent of the typical historical-critical approach, even though naturalism is expressly denied by the seminary professors.

Many seminary professors affirm the multiple authorship of Biblical books for which the Scriptures name a particular author. In line with the typical historical-critical view the substantial Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is denied. Multiple authorship of the prophecy of Isaiah is affirmed. The possibility that the apostle Paul may not have written all the books attributed to him in the New Testament is also allowed in some instances, despite the appearance of Paul's name in the best manuscripts of the Pauline Letters.

In this connection the idea that many editors or redactors worked to alter the text of the Scriptures is regarded as certain. This work is regarded by some as being also inspired by the Holy Ghost. So also in a few instances *tradition* is regarded as inspired, both prior to and after the writing of the books of the Bible. The net effect is to dilute the concept of inspiration by applying it very broadly. The concept that the Holy Spirit supplied the very words of the canonical text (verbal inspiration) is missing in most instances. The reference instead is to men working in historical situations under the general guidance of the Holy Spirit. Thus the product is regarded as God's Word but is also held by many to contain the errors one might expect from human authors.

The cumulative effect of this approach to the Holy Scriptures is indeed serious. It is apparent that a considerable number of the faculty hold a view of the Holy Scriptures that in effect erodes the authority of the canonical text. While the principal doctrines of the Christian faith in most instances still appear to be upheld, the stage has been set for an erosion of the very fundamentals.

This approach to Biblical interpretation begins with the acceptance of the idea that there are human errors and nonhistorical legends and stories in the Scriptures and leads to the idea that miracles can be interpreted into the realm of nonreality or the notion that words attributed to Jesus Christ were never really spoken by Him. Not only does this method of Biblical interpretation introduce the principle of uncertainty into Christian faith and theology, but its underlying assumptions about the nature of Holy Scripture and its authority are so foreign to the Bible, classical Christianity, and the Lutheran Confessions that we must regard it as a false doctrine of the Holy Scriptures.

Inasmuch as some in the church call differences of the type described above "theological" but not "doctrinal," reference is made at this point to an opinion adopted by the Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations on May 24, 1971. It bears the title *An Opinion of the CTRC on the Interpretation of A Review of the Question "What Is a Doctrine?"* (cf. Appendix V). The closing statement of that document affirms:

The Commission on Theology and Church Relations holds that the document entitled "*A Review of the Question 'What Is a Doctrine?'*" does not maintain that matters pertaining to the authorship of Biblical books and the historicity of certain Biblical accounts are outside the scope of "doctrine." Teachings and judgments on such matters ordinarily are not considered "doctrine" or "doctrines" in themselves. However, any teaching or judgment which denies or contradicts what the Scriptures teach must be considered "false doctrine." For such a denial or contradiction is in conflict with the doctrine of the authority of Holy Scripture, the only infallible source and norm of all doctrine. Moreover, the doctrine of the person of Jesus Christ is also involved in the consideration of any of His statements, including those which deal with isagogical or historical

matters. In short, the commission holds that it is a doctrinal matter to contradict or deny whatever the Bible teaches on any subject.

Permissiveness in Doctrine

A second major finding of the inquiry is that many of the professors at the Seminary are permissive of doctrinal positions which are not in harmony with the Lutheran Confessions. The committee frequently asked what the professors would tolerate or allow on the part of others. It was not inquiring into how the professors would handle pastoral problems of individual Christians. It sought to discover to what extent the seminary professors would view alternate views as viable options for Lutherans and Christians.

The transcripts show a surprising amount of permissiveness. Many of the men who in their personal faith agreed with the Synod's doctrinal stance were unwilling to unequivocally condemn positions in conflict with the Scriptures. It was quite generally held that these matters fall into the area of "exegetical" questions that are matters of interpretation where more or less latitude may be allowed.

The documentation that follows in this report shows that permissiveness extends to the following subjects:

a. The possibility that Christ in at least a portion of His teaching may have been a "child of His day" and consequently in error in His understanding of items such as the story of Jonah or the authorship of books of the Old Testament.

b. The possibility that the evolution of man is a viable theory (theistic evolution) and may stand on equal footing with the doctrine of special creation as set forth in the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

c. The probability that the Biblical story of the fall of man (Adam and Eve) is to be taken as only a symbolic account explaining man's sinful nature.

d. The possibility that the denial of the historical virgin birth of Christ (as a biological miracle) may not need to be labeled as false doctrine unless this denial also involved a denial of the deity of Christ or otherwise hurt the Gospel.

e. The possibility that a person could be regarded as a legitimate member of the Christian community even though he interpreted the resurrection of Christ as a spiritual resurrection rather than a physical resurrection.

f. A willingness to approve of intercommunion involving the admission of non-Lutherans to the Lord's Supper provided they affirm a faith in the Real Presence.

Not all of the professors or even a majority exhibited this permissiveness on every topic named, or to the same extent. However, significant numbers of professors are involved.

It is characteristic of the Lutheran Confessions not only to affirm Biblical doctrine but also to expose and condemn false doctrine. Permissiveness of the type cited above must thus come under the judgment of tolerating false doctrine.

There is also a practical side to the issue of permissiveness. The following statement from a letter included in the seminary student section of the report summarizes the situation well:

It has been assumed by many that what is crucial is the character of the personal beliefs of professors. To be sure, such beliefs are important. But what may be equally important is not what a professor believes, but what he allows. If I as a person believe in the virgin birth, but as a professor allow denial of such a virgin birth as a viable option, great harm is done to the Synod. Pastors may be turned out who cannot with a good conscience confess with the Apostles' Creed, "... who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary. . . ." What this means of course is that unconfessional teachings go unchecked.

Attention of the Synod is also drawn, in this connection, to the section of the report dealing with the "Third Use of the Law."

Several professors question the so-called third use of the Law, namely, that it is a normative guide for the believer's life. (This is what our synodical catechetical aids have commonly called its "rule" function as distinguished from the Law's functions as "curb and mirror.") These professors contend that basically the Law has only two functions: (1) political — to assure good government and civil order; (2) theological — to judge and condemn man, who is shown by the Law his need of God's grace in Christ.

The professors contended that the third use of the Law for the Christian is basically the same as the second use (judgmental). The position of Article VI of the Formula of Concord is thus controverted, for it clearly speaks of the Law as

a guide for the Christian's conduct, albeit making clear that the Gospel supplies the motivation for good works.

In denying in effect that the Law functions as the guide and norm of Christian good works, some professors hold that Christians need no other guide for their conduct than Christ and the leadership of the Holy Spirit. This approach comes very close to what our Confessions condemn as "antinomianism," introduces a subjective element in the determination of God's will for Christian behavior, and appears to open the door for "situation ethics." Such a view is not in harmony with the Lutheran Confessions.

Commitment to the Lutheran Confessions

The third major finding of the inquiry deals with commitment to the Lutheran Confessions. The report indicates that all professors claim allegiance to the Lutheran Confessions. However, in the case of many this subscription is limited and circumscribed so that in practice it is something less than full subscription.

It is also quite clear that the great majority of the faculty feels no obligation to agree with the Synod's doctrinal position, beyond a general agreement with Article II of the Synod's Constitution. The Synod has on occasion spoken as to its understanding of a Scriptural teaching. The St. Louis Seminary has said clearly and officially that it feels free to teach in disagreement with the interpretations of Scripture found in such synodical statements and resolutions.

Moreover, although the Synod has clearly asked its members to follow a certain specified procedure when they feel there are problems in synodical statements and resolutions, there is considerable evidence that the St. Louis Seminary faculty has preferred to disregard such synodical statements and resolutions rather than to follow the established procedures for effecting change.

Summary

In summary, the synodical President is pleased to report that the entire Seminary faculty continues to accept and teach many important articles of our Christian faith. But he notes with dismay that he sees in the evidence presented by the Fact Finding Committee:

- a. A false doctrine of the nature of the Holy Scriptures coupled with methods of interpretation which effectually erode the authority of the Scriptures.
- b. A substantial undermining of the confessional doctrine of original sin by a *de facto* denial of the historical events on which it is based.
- c. A permissiveness toward certain false doctrines.
- d. A tendency to deny that the Law is a normative guide for Christian behavior.
- e. A conditional acceptance of the Lutheran Confessions.
- f. A strong claim that the Seminary faculty need not teach in accord with the Synod's doctrinal stance as expressed in the Synod's official doctrinal statements and resolutions.

All of these items are matters of serious concern. However, the nonconfessional views of the nature and authority of Holy Scripture are particularly distressing, for the Scriptures alone are the source of all Christian doctrine and the norm for our proclamation of the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ and all of its supporting articles of faith.

The Synod must face the grave issue of fundamental disagreement in the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures with its far-reaching implications for all of Christian faith and theology. It is a matter of utmost urgency, demanding the Synod's most serious study, its clearest judgment, and its decisive and swift action under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

4. TABLE OF DIVERGENT POSITIONS HELD BY VARIOUS MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY

The purpose of this table is to set forth in an abbreviated form some of the divergent positions expressed by various members of the faculty on a number of topics. The left-hand column, which we have entitled "Synodical Position," expresses views in harmony with our Synod's traditional doctrinal position. The right-hand column, which we have called "Other Positions," summarizes positions that appear to be different from our traditional one. It should be noted, however, that in some cases the two positions are not completely antithetical. It should also be observed that the two columns do not claim to represent the positions of all members of the faculty.

Calling attention to these divergencies in theological position is not intended to imply that there are not large and important areas of agreement within the entire faculty. Nor does it intend to obscure the fact that all members of the faculty formally claim to affirm their ordination vow, that they accept without reservation the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and practice, and all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God (Article II of the LCMS Constitution).

SYNODICAL POSITION

OTHER POSITIONS

I. Limits of Confessional Commitment

A. Doctrinal Content

Lutherans subscribe to the doctrinal content of the Confessions, understanding "doctrinal content" inclusively. It includes, for example, such items as the confessors' literal understanding of the factualness of the Biblical accounts of the creation and the fall of man.

Lutherans subscribe to the doctrinal content of the Confessions, understanding "doctrinal content" restrictively. The confessional view of the factualness of the creation and the fall of Adam and Eve, for example, is not included in confessional subscription because it is not considered to be a doctrinal matter.

B. Primary Intention

The Confessions ground their doctrine in the narrative of Scripture, and this narrative is also a part of the doctrinal content which Lutherans accept. The doctrinal content of the Confessions is not limited to what contemporary readers of the Confessions subjectively determine to be their primary intention.

The Confessions bind us only in respect to their primary intention. For example, with regard to original sin, one need not regard the confessional references to the historicity of Adam and Eve as part of one's confessional commitment, since it is claimed that the Confessions' primary intention was merely to affirm the fallen state of man.

C. Messianic Prophecy

Although not insisting on the Confessions' understanding of all exegetical details or even to the Confessions' use of certain Bible passages, Lutherans

Acceptance of the Confessions does not include the doctrinal content which the Confessions derive from individual Bible passages. Accordingly, Lu-

accept as part of the doctrinal content of the Confessions the confessional identification of Christ in the Old Testament and the confessional claim that the patriarchs believed in the "Seed of the Woman," "Seed of Abraham," and "David's Son," who was to come and save His people. (Cf. *Formula of Concord*, SD, V, 23)

therans need not accept the position of the Confessions that the Old Testament patriarchs believed in a Savior who was to come.

D. Theological Constructions

While recognizing that confessional subscription does not necessarily bind us to the specific terms and concepts in which confessional positions are set forth, Lutherans affirm that whatever the Confessions set forth on the basis of Holy Scripture cannot be excluded from the subscribed doctrinal content of the Confessions on the grounds that it is a "theological construction."

Some of the doctrinal statements of the Confessions may be regarded as nonbinding theological constructions. For example, the confessional view of man's creation in the "image of God" may be regarded as a product of "theologizing" which need not be accepted as a part of the doctrinal content of the Confessions.

II. Synodical Doctrinal Statements

The Synod's doctrinal position is stated in Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, but this position may be applied to contemporary problems in synodical statements and resolutions.

Synodical doctrinal statements are under the Scriptures and the Confessions, but they are to be honored and upheld by teaching in accord with them. If problems or difficulties are discovered in such statements, change is to be sought in accord with synodically designated procedures.

The Synod's doctrinal position is limited to what is expressly stated in Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. Synod's doctrinal statements are to be honored and upheld by studying them to determine their adequacy but not necessarily by teaching in accord with them.

[NOTE: Some holding this position appear to regard certain synodical statements as having near-binding force, e. g., the Mission Affirmations or resolutions against racism.]

III. The Holy Scriptures

A. Inspiration

The Holy Scriptures are God's verbally inspired Word; that is, all their words are the very speech of God. Both the human authors and their words were inspired, for men of God, using their own vocabulary and style, wrote the very words that the Holy Spirit wanted them to write. Although it is impossible to understand how this miraculous action of the Holy Spirit worked, Lutherans believe that the Spirit's inspiration makes the Bible a unique book, qualitatively different from all other literature (including the writings of later Christians who may also claim the guidance of the Spirit). Only the canonical books of Scripture are to be regarded as "inspired" in this sense of the term.

The Holy Scriptures are God's verbally inspired Word; that is, they are the words of men who were guided by the Holy Spirit to proclaim God's message of judgment and grace. Inspiration alone did not make the Scriptures a unique or qualitatively different book, for the Spirit "inspires" believers in every age. Thus tradition in the early church, including non-canonical writings, can be regarded as "inspired" by the Holy Spirit, as can the witness of contemporary Christians.

B. Authority

Because the Scriptures are the written Word of God centering in the Gospel, they have the power to lead men to faith in Christ and the au-

The Scriptures have authority by virtue of the faith they produce and because they present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to men. Thus the au-

thority to serve as the church's norm for faith and life. The Scriptures are authoritative both in terms of what they *are* (God's Word) and in terms of what they *do* (lead men to Christ).

C. Inerrancy

There is no error of fact of any kind in the Scriptures. This does not deny the existence of copyists' errors in the extant manuscripts. Scripture is truthful in every respect, also in the sense that it contains no contradictions in meaning or intent. Problems and apparent contradictions in Scripture may be caused by copyists' errors or by a lack of information or understanding on our part but are not to be attributed to error on the part of the inspired writers. The Scriptures do accomplish their divine purpose of bringing men to faith in Jesus Christ, but this attribute of the Scriptures is more accurately described as "efficacy" than as "inerrancy."

D. Bible and Gospel

The Scriptures are the only source and norm of doctrine in the church (formal principle), while the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the chief doctrine of the Bible and the heart of the Christian faith (material principle). The Gospel is a basic presupposition for the interpretation of Holy Scripture (that is, one approaches the Scriptures expecting to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ and to relate all that he reads there to Him), but it does not determine the meaning of the Biblical text. Whatever the text says is the meaning of the text and is to be accepted as such because it is the Word of God. The grammar, context, and literary form of a text determine if it is to be understood literally or otherwise.

E. The Intent of a Passage

Discovering the intent of a passage is vital to understanding its meaning, but such intent is not to be established subjectively. Moreover, the determination of the theological meaning of a passage does not mean that the historical, factual vehicle of the narrative is nonvital and insignificant. It is a part of the message.

thority of Scripture is to be understood to be resident primarily in its content and effect rather than in its nature as God's own Word.

OTHER POSITIONS

The Holy Scriptures are inerrant only insofar as they accomplish their purpose of bringing the Gospel to men and creating faith and life. Although the Scriptures are reliable, they exhibit the frailties common to human authors. Thus they err in matters of history, geography, and science and contain various contradictions, including theological contradictions. For example, related historical accounts such as Gen. 1:1-2:4a and Gen. 2:4b-25 may be regarded as contradictory and therefore need not be treated as accounts of something that actually happened.

The Gospel is not only the center of the Christian faith but the criterion of acceptable Biblical interpretation. Thus no interpretation of a Biblical text need be rejected unless it harms the Gospel. Considerable latitude needs to be given in the interpretation of the Bible in a nonliteral, non-historical way, so long as this does not affect the Gospel. For example, the fall of Adam and Eve or the world flood need not be accepted as factual so long as the doctrinal lesson of sin and grace is preserved in the interpretation.

F. The Historical-Critical Method

1. Controls

Since the Bible was written by men at different times and places and for various particular purposes, historical methods play an important part in its interpretation. Such methods must recognize the following: the Bible's own view of history must be honored; its inspiration is unique; the Bible

So long as we accept the doctrinal intent of a passage, we may reject the historical setting of a given narrative. Thus in Genesis 1 and 2 one may accept the fact that man was created in the image of God but deny the historical and literal nature of the creation account. Other examples: the "fall" in Genesis 3; the reference to Adam's fall in Romans 5; the virgin birth; the ascension of Jesus Christ.

The historical-critical method may be employed if the following controls, or "Lutheran presuppositions," are followed: The Scriptures are God's Word; God's Spirit will aid us to hear Him speak; the Gospel is a hermeneutical principle; anything cutting down the authority of the Gospel is

is true in a way that surpasses all other literature; external factors should not be imposed on the text; one may not postulate varying and conflicting theologies in Scripture since this destroys the concept of the unity of Scripture; one may not have any level of authority beyond or behind the text.

The historical-critical method as commonly practiced is basically inimical to these presuppositions. Practitioners of the historical-critical method are frequently obsessed with source analysis to the detriment of paying proper attention to the teaching of the Biblical books.

2. Source Hypotheses

Whatever the Scriptures say about themselves, including their authorship, is to be accepted. Accordingly, several current source hypotheses about the authorship of the Pentateuch, Isaiah, and the Gospels are rejected. The Scriptures, both within and between the various books, present a unified theology.

prohibited; confessional subscription will guard us from denying such things as the resurrection; good scholarship is an effective control.

[NOTE: The CTCR guidelines ("A Lutheran Stance Toward Contemporary Biblical Studies") were frequently listed as acceptable, but the controls spelled out in these guidelines were only infrequently in evidence in the discussions.]

3. Historical Truthfulness

Whenever the Biblical narratives state that something happened, such narratives may not be treated as fictional interpretations but should be regarded as true accounts of actual events.

Current conclusions of source hypotheses, form and redaction criticism, may be accepted, even if they conflict with the Scriptures. Multiple sources, such as JEDP, are acknowledged for many books. There are internal contradictions in fact in Biblical books. Multiple sources may conflict with each other in both thought and theology.

Some formally historical narratives in the Bible may have a relationship to true original events, but Biblical authors and editors frequently "re-interpret" past history to serve their own purposes. These reinterpretations may not correspond to fact. While the Bible does not contain "myths" in the technical sense of the term, it does contain "stories" and "legends" which may not be historically true even though they are written in a historical form.

The story of the brazen serpent, the histories of the patriarchs, the account of the cursing of the fig tree, and the account of John the Baptist's ministry in the wilderness may be regarded as examples of such fictional reinterpretations which are intended to serve some homiletic or apologetic purpose.

4. Miracles

All miracles, or "mighty acts of God," reported in the Scriptures are to be accepted as such. Interpreting the miracles of Jesus as inventions of the New Testament community is a tampering with the way our Lord intended to exhibit Himself as the God-man who is the promised Messiah and Savior of the world.

On principle one must allow the possibility that Jesus performed all miracles attributed to Him in the Gospels. However, it is permissible for exegetical reasons to reinterpret miracles so as to eliminate their reality by treating them as parables or some other type of literary device. Whether certain Biblical miracles (for example, Christ's walking on the water) actually happened or not is unimportant; what is important is to determine what God is trying to tell us through such accounts.

5. The Words of Jesus

Although Jesus' words may have been modified somewhat by oral tradition in the early church or by the evangelists, the New Testament Gospels

As the early Christian community passed on the words of Jesus, it "applied" and "interpreted" and "reinterpreted" them in new situations. This

record Jesus' words substantially as He spoke them. We therefore treat those words as having Jesus' own authority rather than as imaginative additions of the early church.

creative activity may have included altering them and even producing discourses which Jesus never gave. Although such accounts have canonical authority, they cannot be treated as Jesus' own words.

6. The Relationship of the Testaments

Although Old Testament exegesis may properly begin with the Old Testament itself, the Christian interpreter must use the New Testament in interpreting the old. Prophecy in the Old Testament taught people to expect a Messiah, but the understanding was not equally intensive in all generations. There are Messianic passages in the Old Testament that point directly to Christ. The New Testament identification of an Old Testament passage as Messianic is normative.

Old Testament exegesis can be done on its own terms, that is, without the New Testament's witness to its meaning. While the Old Testament may be regarded as Messianic in a general way, there are few if any Old Testament prophecies which point directly to Christ. Most Old Testament passages traditionally regarded as Messianic prophecies actually point only to an event in the time of the prophet and were later applied by the New Testament to Christ only in a secondary sense. Therefore, when the New Testament identifies an Old Testament passage as Messianic, the exegete need not regard this as normative.

7. Old Testament Authorship

Whatever Jesus and the New Testament writers say about the authorship of Old Testament books or passages must be regarded as true. Although Jesus, the omniscient Son of God, spoke as a man of His time, the Bible gives no indication that He ever taught error or accommodated Himself to error, even in His state of humiliation.

Jesus' references to the authorship of Old Testament books or passages were sometimes incorrect. In such references Jesus was simply using a common way of speaking, or accommodating Himself to the knowledge level of His audience, or in His state of humiliation He Himself may not have known any better.

IV. Original Sin and Evolution

As an explanation of human origin, theories of the evolution of man are in conflict with the Biblical doctrines of creation, the fall, and original sin and thereby constitute an implicit denial of the Gospel.

Man's special creation by God is affirmed, but theistic evolution is regarded as a viable option. Original sin is affirmed as the universal plight of man but not as the condition brought into the world by the historical fall of the first two people God created, Adam and Eve.

V. The Law and Christian Life

Although the primary function of God's Law is to reveal and accuse man's sin against God, the Law also functions to inform Christians of what God's will is for their life and conduct.

God's Law accuses man of his sin but does not function as guide and norm of Christian good works.

VI. Fellowship and Intercommunion

Agreement in the doctrine of the Gospel and all its articles is the proper basis for the practice of church fellowship among Christians. Because the Eucharist is a sign of the existing unity of faith, only Lutherans in fellowship should ordinarily be communed at our altars (although in emergency situations, other Christians who confess their faith in Christ's

Complete agreement in doctrine is not necessary for the practice of church fellowship, so long as there is agreement in the essential aspects of the Gospel. Because the Eucharist is a means for the achievement of the unity of faith, non-Lutherans may be communed at our altars if they profess faith in Christ and recognize His presence in the Lord's Supper. Inter-

forgiveness of sins and accept the Real Presence of His body and blood in the Lord's Supper may also be communed). Intercommunion with non-Lutherans, as well as the participation of non-Lutheran officiants in Lutheran worship services, is not permissible.

communion and participation in joint worship services with other Lutherans can be practiced without violating Lutheran principles.

Additional Divergencies

The following divergencies within the faculty are also of significance:

1. All members of the faculty define the *Gospel* as the message of God's gracious forgiveness of man's sin on account of Jesus Christ and His completely adequate work of reconciliation. But there is also a tendency to fail to distinguish adequately between the Gospel and the fruits of the Gospel (such as good works and Christian social action) and to speak of both the message of God's grace and of the believer's response in His newly created life as "Gospel."
2. All faculty members personally accept the *virgin birth of Jesus Christ*, but some express reluctance to pronounce an adverse judgment on someone who denies it for exegetical reasons.
3. All faculty members personally accept the *true bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ*, but there is some willingness to concede that a person may be regarded as a Christian who does not fully accept the truly physical nature of Christ's resurrection.
4. All members of the faculty agree that the *church and its ministry* have the task of proclaiming the Gospel and administering the sacraments, but some appear to give Christian social action the same priority as the proclamation of the Gospel.
5. There is a general acceptance of the confessional position which affirms the *existence of angels and a personal devil*, but some reluctance to make this affirmation was also discovered.
6. Some faculty members express their agreement with the Synod's lodge policy, while others feel that it is permissible to accept lodge members under certain conditions.
7. There is disagreement within the faculty on whether it would be in the best interests of confessional Lutheran theological education to accept the provision of a new curriculum proposal that would permit students of Concordia Seminary to spend up to one year of their seminary studies at a seminary of another denomination.

5. THE FINDINGS BY TOPICS

In an effort to highlight the findings of the Fact Finding Committee and to provide samples of the documentation from the Fact Finding Committee report, this section provides excerpts from the transcripts of the interviews, from essays, and from articles of the professors. These excerpts are divided into sections on a topical basis. Each section is introduced by a brief summary and appraisal by the synodical President.

This introduction also contains references to the Lutheran Confessions in several instances. This material is designed to be of help to the church in evaluating the issues under discussion.

The reader in each instance will want to compare the documentation from the interviews and essays with the summaries and appraisals of the synodical President.

Most sections also contain references to *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, sent to the church by the synodical President on March 3, 1972. This referral to *A Statement* is not intended to give that document the status of a "standard of orthodoxy." It is merely this, that the synodical President believes it to be a good statement of Lutheran doctrine on issues in controversy. He also believes that the antitheses in *A Statement* are useful in studying the issues that face the church today.

The President's view that *A Statement* represents a useful exposition of Synod's doctrinal stance on controverted issues is supported by a great volume of positive mail on this subject. There are many who have questions, but the vast majority approve. This is also reflected in action taken by the District conventions this summer. The issuance of *A Statement* was heartily approved by the majority.

5a. The Findings Concerning The Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures

The Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in true Lutheran fashion designates "The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and practice" (Art. II, 1). The professors of the St. Louis Seminary offer their allegiance to this principle both collectively and individually.

The Fact Finding Committee deemed this topic to be of major importance. It was aware of Doctor Walther's statement:

Since all divisions within Christendom appeal to Scripture, the mere confession that one believes what is in Scripture is not a confession that clearly distinguishes the confessor from the false believer. For, in spite of this confession, no one knows whether one accepts Scripture in the true sense or not or whether one is a Papist, or an enthusiast, or a Rationalist, or an orthodox Christian. Therefore an unconditional subscription is indispensable. For the sake of clarity it is necessary to declare how one understands and interprets Scripture and the articles of faith that are contained in it. (CTM, XVIII, No. 4, April 1947, p. 244)

The Fact Finding Committee found general agreement that the Holy Scriptures are God's Word to man. The term "verbal inspiration" is generally accepted. However, in many instances the term is either not explicitly defined or is in fact emptied of the meaning that verbal inspiration has classically held for the Lutheran Church. In fact there is evidence that the old terminology has been loaded with a new meaning. For example, inspiration is spoken of as including all writers, editors, and bearers of the tradition. In effect, verbal inspiration is expanded to the point of losing any distinctiveness so far as the canonical text is concerned.

Furthermore, the authority of the Scriptures is spoken of as being derived from the writers' proximity to the historical events. The Spirit is active in inspiration, but the writers' closeness to the events is given as the reason for believing in the truthfulness of the New Testament writings. The Scriptures' authority is thus resident in the Biblical writers' close connection with the historic events rather than the fact that the Holy Spirit by inspiration is the Author of the very words found in the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit is linked in, but He is said to work through historical circumstances in such a way that in effect the New Testament writings by inspiration are nothing more than human responses to a given need or situation in the early community. This is consistent with the naturalistic presupposition of the historical-critical method to which reference is made later in this report.

The concept of the Spirit of God working in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is broadened in some instances to include a type of continuing inspiration in the church which is not different in essence from the inspiration of the apostles and prophets. Some professors claim that the oral traditions of the church were inspired. Interpreters of the Scriptures are likewise said to be inspired. It is recognized by these professors that the Scriptures are unique, but this uniqueness lies in the proximity of the apostolic authors to the original event and in a unique historical relationship to Christ.

In essence this position is akin to that of traditional Roman Catholicism, which holds that both tradition and the Scriptures are inspired, so that the church has two sources of revelation. This kinship is further evidenced by the fact that some professors assert that doctrines such as the virgin birth and the resurrection of Christ are protected because the creeds of the church proclaim them. The position then appears to be that a doctrine should be taught not merely because the Bible proclaims it but also because the church has determined that a given teaching is a doctrine. This comes close to making the church rather than the Bible the primary norm for theology.

In this connection it is important to note that the Lutheran Confessions make a clear and distinct distinction between the authority of the Scriptures and that of the tradition of the church.

Apology XII, 66: "Our opponents cry out that they are the church and follow the consensus of the church. But here Peter cites the consensus of the church in support of our position: 'To him all the prophets bear witness that every one who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name,' etc. Surely the consensus of the prophets should be interpreted as the consensus of the universal church. Neither to the pope nor to the church do we grant the authority to issue decrees contrary to this consensus of the prophets."

Apology XV, 17: "Finally, what assurance do we have that religious rites established by men without God's command can justify since we can affirm nothing about the will of God without the Word of God?"

Apology XXIV, 94-95: "Even though they have support at most from Gregory and the more recent theologians, we set against them the clearest and surest passages of Scripture. There is also great variety among the Fathers. They were men and they could err and be deceived."

Apology XXVIII, 18-19: "Certainly the statement, 'He who hears you hears me' (Luke 10:16), is not referring to traditions but is rather directed against traditions. It is not what they call a 'commandment with unlimited authority,' but rather a 'caution about something prescribed,' about a special commandment. It is a testimony given to the apostles so that we may believe them on the basis of another's Word rather than on the basis of their own. For Christ wants to assure us, as was necessary, that the Word is efficacious when it is delivered by men and that we should not look for another word from heaven. 'He who hears you hears me' cannot be applied to traditions. For Christ requires them to teach in such a way that he might be heard, because he says, 'hear me.' Therefore he wants his voice, his Word to be heard, not human traditions."

Smalcald Articles, Part II, Art. II, 15: "It will not do to make articles of faith out of the holy Fathers' words or works. . . . This means that the Word of God shall establish articles of faith and no one else, not even an angel."

Smalcald Articles, Part III, Art. VIII, 3: "In these matters, which concern the external, spoken Word, we must hold firmly to the conviction that

God gives no one his Spirit or grace except through or with the external Word which comes before. Thus we shall be protected from the enthusiasts — that is, from the spiritualists who boast that they possess the Spirit without and before the Word and who therefore judge, interpret, and twist the Scriptures or spoken Word according to their pleasure.”*

The excerpts from the official transcripts that follow provide documentation from the report of the Fact Finding Committee for the description of positions held by members of the faculty as given above. — In studying positions held on inspiration, you may wish to consult *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, especially Section IV, “Holy Scripture, A. The Inspiration of Scripture” (see Appendix IV).

* Unless noted otherwise, all quotations and references to the Lutheran Confessions are taken from the Tappert edition: Theodore G. Tappert, ed. “The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.” Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959.

Documentation

Prof. A. Transcript

p. 2

COMMITTEE: Now in terms of your stance over against Scripture, do you want to tell us just a little bit about that: how you view Scripture, with reference to its authority, with reference to the source of its authority, and so on? Just sort of an individual statement on that.

PROF. A: When I go to the Scriptures, I have learned to expect to hear God speaking there. Obviously, when I hear God speak, this is for me the ultimate authority. And I have learned to hear Him speak so clearly and so often in the Scriptures that I am persuaded that He has given those Scriptures, inspired them, led the writers so uniquely in such a way that when I go there I can expect them, well, I expect to hear Him speak, and I know that they are trustworthy and, well, do you want me to adumbrate further?

COMMITTEE: Trustworthy in what sense? Do you want to talk about that a little bit?

PROF. A: I find them to be trustworthy; by faith I would assert that the Scriptures are trustworthy in fulfilling that purpose for which God has given them; and so when I go to the Scriptures, I do not ask: Is — can I trust this, or do I not trust this? I go there; I say: What does God wish to speak to me here? What is the sacred author, what is his intention on the assumption of the sacred author is the intention of God, since His Spirit is leading him? So I — and I listen and try to see whatever it is that he is saying. I expect it basically to be a word of judgment or a word of promise. I think I am persuaded that the Confessions have hit the heart of it there, that the purpose of the Scriptures is to convince us of sin, show us our need for the Savior, and then to proclaim that good word that in Jesus Christ God would forgive us and then would equip us so that we can live a life which is of service to Him and to fellowman.

Prof. B. Transcript

pp. 5-9

COMMITTEE: Could you tell us rather succinctly, but still completely, what you think now today is the relationship between verbal inspiration and the documentary hypothesis?

PROF. B: Yes. What made it possible for me to approach that equation of verbal inspiration and documentary hypothesis was the fact that the Swedish Old Testament scholars had introduced into this whole question their notion of oral tradition, which they interpreted in this way: From the time of Moses until the time of David, a period of 300 years, give or take some, elapsed. During those 300 years the great truths that God had made known to His people up to the time of Moses were transmitted orally. Some of the revelations began to be written down in short poems, in little liturgies, in credos, but it was only around the time of David, in the 10th century, that the first big narrative recording of the

history of God's people was put down; to me this afforded a bridge between the Mosaic authority in the Pentateuch and the first recording of the documents in JEDP, namely, the Yahwist, who is generally accepted now to have written during the time of David. To me this was a way of preserving the Mosaic authority of the Pentateuch even though it was recorded 300 years later.

I took the 2 Peter text, “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit,” with its accent on ἐλάλησαν, to demonstrate that the Spirit of God was active when these people were speaking throughout the Old Testament period and especially from the time of Moses to the time of the J source. And if you take this text together with the 2 Timothy text that speaks about all Scripture being inspired by God, then you have every step in the written program covered by the term verbal inspiration. To me this meant that I could justify the verbal inspiration of everything from the time of Moses up to the time of David and then also in succeeding centuries, 800 when the second document was recorded, the so-called Elohist, 600 when the third document, the Deuteronomist, was recorded, and 500 when the Priestly source was put into writing. During all that time from 1000 to 500 the oral tradition, the people speaking by inspiration of the Spirit of God, continued side by side with the written tradition. And that is why for instance a great chapter like the day of atonement in Leviticus 16, which Wellhausen would ascribe to the Priestly source and say must have been written as recently as 500 B.C., could have been recorded in 500 B.C. but still reflects an ancient oral tradition going back to the time of Moses. Thus even Leviticus 16 with the two goats, one going off into the wilderness and the other one being slaughtered, is an ancient tradition imbedded in what was written down at a relatively late date. It is largely Gerhard von Rad and Martin Noth over at the German universities who have contended that the oral traditions are much older than the literary deposits would indicate. It was putting those two together, the bridge from 1300 to 1000 and the ongoing process of both the oral and the written tradition, which I felt still enabled me to subscribe to verbal inspiration.

COMMITTEE: Would you say then that the — well, put it this way — what was the role of editors as they rewrote, reworked, discarded, added material? Are you saying that in each instance all of this was inspired?

PROF. B: If in each instance the text has been incorporated into the canon, the answer will need to be: Yes, in each instance the Spirit of God was functioning in that process. As an example I would like to cite Jeremiah 36, where the first edition of the prophet's words was burned by King Jehoiakim. Whereupon the prophet was constrained to dictate once more to Baruch the content of that first tradition. But at the end of chapter 36 it says, “And Jeremiah added many words that were not in the first edition.” Now it is granted this is the same man in each instance, but it is still a very fine

example of what we call an addition or a redaction or an editor working on the previous text. Actually we do not have the first edition of Jeremiah's work, we have only that one which was redone by his scribe, Baruch. If Baruch has done this—and certainly in the process of dictation we would have to argue that he too bore the cloak of inspiration because he was doing the writing and the words came from the lips of Jeremiah, the same would apply to the pupils of an Isaiah. When you raise the question of Second Isaiah or Third Isaiah, it may be preferable to speak of a school of Isaiah. The disciples of these men could well be the ones who carried on the tradition and in some cases added to the original message of the author, but in each of these instances the process of inspiration was certainly still in force.

COMMITTEE: Are you talking about inspiration in the sense of, well, use the expression "content and fitting word," or that each word was inspired, or are you talking about a general overarching guidance by the Spirit? Which are you talking about?

PROF. B: No, I would say that every word is inspired, and that is why our study of these texts has to be concentrating on every single word. If we take seriously that each of those words which have come to us is the verbally inspired Word of God, then I have to use every possible avenue and device and technique in order to understand what those words are.

COMMITTEE: In your paper on Isaiah, page 20, you deal with the question of the appearance of King Cyrus. And you say it is more plausible to explain these two references to King Cyrus by granting that the author of these chapters was living at a time when King Cyrus has made his appearance on the stage of history than to believe that God gave this name to Isaiah by inspiration two centuries earlier. It is simply not demonstrable, even though Young claims that it is, that the Cyrus passages are presented in such a way that this king will appear in the far-off future. The outstanding characteristic in Hebrew prophecy is that the judgment or deliverance which it proclaims was immediately forthcoming. Now are you saying that someone other than Isaiah, someone living after the time of King Cyrus, was inspired to put this in and to make it appear that it was a prophecy of something which is to come and yet in fact it was only a retrodiction and that that process was inspired also?

PROF. B: One of the professors at Yale, Charles Cutler Torrey, has argued that the two references to the name Cyrus were introduced at a later time, because the name Cyrus does not occur anywhere else in all of that section of Isaiah. But Torrey's proposal has not been given any credence by scholars or interpreters of the Book of Isaiah. That the term Cyrus first occurred when the author wrote the book is I think part of the history of the Old Testament. God could surely have told the author Isaiah in the middle of the 8th century that a king named Cyrus would appear and would even be called the servant of Yahweh. But the evidence pertaining to this is that throughout the Old Testament God usually inspired His people to speak about persons and characters who had appeared on the stage of history. I think that can be shown in a dozen instances. Take the four great prophets of the 8th century: Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah. They refer consistently to the Assyrian armies that are attacking; this is a clear indication that it was Assyria that threatened Israel in their day. But when you come to the material in Isaiah 40 to 66, the name Assyria has completely disappeared, and now you have the name Babylon. That means that Babylon is on history's stage, and this calls for an authorship in the Babylonian exile for chapters 40 to 66. The same argument would of course hold that the name Babylon could have been introduced by inspiration by God in the 8th century. The possibility is there, but the analogy of how God did it elsewhere would argue against that.

COMMITTEE: On the basis of that analogy you in effect are challenging the text as to what it says and saying that this was added later and in effect really was not an integral part of the text originally?

PROF. B: No. On the basis of my paper on Isaiah I feel that chapters 40 to 55 were written in 550; 200 years after the time of the original Isaiah. At that time King Cyrus was there.

COMMITTEE: But it was made to appear that it had been written earlier and that it was indeed a prophecy of that which is to come?

PROF. B: I don't know that that is demonstrable, that it was made to appear that way.

COMMITTEE: You don't think that is the natural—

PROF. B: No, the 66 chapters of Isaiah certainly came into the canon as a corpus. But the fact that the name Babylon is used in chapters 40 to 66 in contrast to the name Assyria in the first 39 chapters is, I think, simply a historical dividing point for the two books.

COMMITTEE: I would just like to finish on this because I am not sure I understood Prof. B's answer to your question. As you read this, it appears, does it not, that Cyrus is something in the future, I think is what Dr. X was getting at. If this was inspired, as you seem to indicate that it was regardless of who wrote it, then it was inspired in the 6th century but made to appear as though it were much before. What did you mean when you said it is not demonstrable, you are not sure that it is demonstrable that it appears to be something in the future?

PROF. B: We don't know how the people of the Old Testament interpreted those chapters of Isaiah, but I think from all of the evidence that is available, beginning at chapter 40 the book was written, let's say in 550; that is the date that I quoted. Well, Cyrus came in 538. Now I would hold that it was written in a prophetic vein of Cyrus but in the very immediate future, from the vantage point of the Babylonian captivity, which was just about over.

To show that I teach that kind of verbal prophetic inspiration, may I say this: When the prophet Amos began to preach almost simultaneously with Isaiah in 750, there was as yet no sign on the historical horizon that the Assyrian armies were going to threaten Palestine. And yet Amos is preaching that judgment is coming from the east, and he even mentions that it is coming from the land of Assyria. I have no way of knowing where Amos got that except from God Himself. But Amos is speaking to his own century, and that is why the situation is a little different there than it is in the case of the two Cyrus references in Isaiah.

COMMITTEE: So it is still predictive, but it is only a few years predictive.

PROF. B: That is right.

COMMITTEE: Do you feel uncomfortable if the prediction stretches out longer, is that what you are saying?

PROF. B: No. I feel that there are no other instances in the Old Testament where God took that big leap of 200 years.

COMMITTEE: You spoke before of a harmony between the documentary hypothesis and verbal inspiration. I think you said: providing these are properly defined, or something like that, and then we talked a little bit about verbal inspiration and defining this. In most of our literature I guess this has assumed also on the part of the human writers a freedom from what lapses of memory and errors of fact. Would your definition of verbal inspiration also include this for the redactors or editors and so forth of the Old Testament?

PROF. B.: I think this ties in directly with the idea of the veracity and the truthfulness of the entire Old and New Testament record. Yes, because this is God's verbally inspired Word, therefore the authors are assured of keeping it truthful.

COMMITTEES: Well, factually also!

PROF. B: That is right.

Prof. B Transcript

pp. 22-23

COMMITTEE: What do you do then with chapters 11 to 27 [of Leviticus], each of which except chapter 26 begins with the words, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying." Now were these communications from God to Moses preserved in the tradition, and then were they put down in this form? What do you do with the first verse of every one of those chapters, 11 to 27? They all begin the same: "And the Lord spake unto Moses," but 26 does not. Now what do you do with that?

PROF. B: Well, this may be very difficult for Prof. X to follow, but I would say that this is the Mosaic tradition, which is preserved in the middle of Leviticus but which was not put into writing in the form that we have it now until 850 B. C. This section is part of a subunit called the Holiness

Code, which in its written form is dated at about 850 B.C. But suppose this material was written down in 850, then my argument would be that from 1300 to 850 that Mosiac tradition was handed down orally by the priestly families until it was recorded within their school first in 850 and then it was incorporated into the whole of Leviticus in 500.

COMMITTEE: In other words, during the intervening centuries until it was placed into the written code by the priests, they did not have this material then except in oral tradition, that would be your position?

PROF. B: Yes. But they very definitely had it in that oral tradition, and the whole history and culture of the Near East shows that in this region oral tradition was the usual medium of communication. The teacher taught his pupil to memorize completely lecture after lecture, so that the pupil might reproduce his master's voice and thus assure that that voice would be preserved by his son, grandson, etc.

COMMITTEE: You don't think then that some of these things could have been written down. I want to comment on that. My seminary years go back quite a number, 44 in fact, but in those days we went to Third Baptist Church and heard a lecturer about 1925-26 who stated: "People, I want to explain to you that the Pentateuch could not have been written by Moses because writing was not invented," and we wanted to rise up in horror when we thought of the Code of Hammurabi and so on. But since there was writing at this time, could not much of this have been written down even in your own system of explanation?

PROF. B: Yes, I think if you counted up within the Pentateuch the passages that read, "and Moses wrote," there would be a goodly number.

COMMITTEE: In the interest of clarification it seems to me that when you are talking you are especially with answer to X here rather consistently talking about the oral tradition, you are saying that the oral tradition was carefully preserved. Now in view of what you have just said with regard to the early existence of writing, why the insistence that this must have been probably oral tradition rather than written by Moses where it says he was told to write?

PROF. B: Because back in Moses' time they wouldn't have written in the style in which Leviticus 11 to 28 is now written. This is the much later style of Hebrew that is characteristic of the Priestly school.

COMMITTEE: Of course with your dozens of editors why couldn't the style have been done over?

PROF. B: That surely should be allowed, that I would certainly concede.

COMMITTEE: Well, if one concedes that, then does one need to insist that it must have been oral tradition?

PROF. B: I think you have to weigh the evidence on both sides of this question. I don't think that oral tradition closes the door on written tradition. A man like Ivan Engnell in Sweden was so one-sided in his accent on oral tradition that he hardly conceded any place to the writing. I disagree with Engnell; at this point of the discussion I think the option for writing should be allowed, but it should be considered side by side with the oral tradition.

Prof. C Transcript

pp. 2-3

PROF. C: God has not only acted in the midst of human history but has also spoken in human language. Words from God have enabled men to know the true significance of their condition without Him, and words from God have preceded, accompanied, and/or followed all the universally significant events in which God acted, making the effects of those gracious acts known and available to men. Through these words men have been helped to conform their lives to God's will.

So these words were truly God's words using truly human language. They were spoken and written by God working through historical human beings. Some of them are known by name while others remain unknown to us. But all these words—at least as they came eventually to be included in the canonical scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments—were the very words of God to the situations in which they were first spoken or written.

I affirm the genuinely historical character both of God's special acts in human history and of God's words spoken and written through historical human beings. Bound by this presupposition about God in history, I find myself constrained to use a rigorously historical methodology in my study of both the events and the words.

Prof. D Transcript

pp. 18-19

PROF. D: That is again a long package of comments and one big question. I really don't have any great difficulty with that problem at all. One of the important things I think I mentioned a moment ago was that when one recognizes verbal inspiration one is concerned precisely with the fact that all words . . . [tape change]. Verbal inspiration implies a concern for every element, every detail of the text, and that is one thing I insist upon with my students, that every little word, no matter how small or apparently insignificant, has to be faced. And precisely at the point where there may appear to be tensions between one position and another, you frequently get the insight into the fact that one person is trying to say something rather different than the other person precisely because he is facing a different historical situation. Now your text is a good example. Paul may at different points in his life, because he has to face different situations, accent and focus a different dimension of his message to a different group of people. And I think one doesn't preach precisely the same to every audience. And if one looked through your sermons, I have a hunch that there would be inconsistencies even within the text of your sermons over against the audiences that you talked to. Now just because there is an inconsistency at two different points in time doesn't mean that you have a contradiction in the sense that here one is true and the other is untrue or that there is a conflict with the concept of inspiration. Inspiration very clearly, and you and I would assert basically the whole business that is in the understanding of inspiration in the *Hermeneutics Project* [of CTCR Report on table at time]. Inspiration is the work of the Spirit, and ultimately it is a mystery. We assert that the men of God who spoke in this whole text called the Scripture are inspired. That somehow God has worked in them through them and that God works in us through the Word that they have given us to bring us His message. And whether it is the Yahwist tradition or the Priestly tradition, or whatever the tradition, God has seen fit that in and through those differences to give us truths, God has seen fit that here men of God are inspired, and the differences are precisely the clue often to the richness and the depth of the message of God. They do not consist, or constitute rather, untruth precisely because there is a difference of intention or an inconsistency. Those inconsistencies are frequently signs of differences of position and different theologies that are there as richness to meet different theological situations or historical situations. Now there may be other points you want to. . .

Prof. CC Transcript

p. 2

COMMITTEE: We generally talk about Scripture a little bit. You said that we don't know Christ without the Scripture, and certainly that is a good Lutheran position. And then you made a couple of other statements. I think it might be interesting just to have you comment on those a little bit more. One of them was: you said you believe that God inspired the writers verbally. Would you care to tell us a little how you understand that?

PROF. CC: He communicated in words, and I believe the Scriptures as God gave them were the way God wanted them to be, and I believe that they communicate the truths He wanted to communicate to us, and communicated them effectively.

COMMITTEE: Now Hebrews tells us there are various ways in which God came to the holy writers, and one of those the Scripture designates as revelation in terms of the Lord coming in a very special way; it is described as revelation. Do you have any trouble with the concept that God may have come unto a person in a dream or a vision or whatever and communicated to him information that they would not have had available otherwise in terms of what His will was, His plans for man, or whatever?

PROF. CC: None whatsoever. I see this as part of the witnessing function of God of which I spoke. God witnesses, He reveals Himself through mighty deeds, and He reveals

Himself through His Word; and God too lets form follow function as I see it in revelation. He took many forms in which He revealed His will to man, and dreams, visions were certainly one of them.

Prof. E Transcript

pp. 8—10

COMMITTEE: You spoke before about Peter being closer to the event than we are. Is this the essential difference, or what is the difference between the revelation of God Himself through what we call the Word or Scripture and the revelation that comes through your sermon? Is something supernatural involved in the process through Peter, or is it simply the proximity to the event that makes him more authoritative than you or me?

PROF. E: In the paper you have before you I say that the Bible is a collection of historical documents and that I believe in their message because of their historicity and their factualness, of their truthfulness, and that although Scripture is inspired it is therefore given by the Holy Spirit, that my confidence in the truthfulness of Scripture does not lie in its inspiration but rather in its historicity. Now let me explain that further. In the first three centuries there were many groups of people who claimed to be inspired. The Montanists claimed to be inspired, and Ignatius claimed to be inspired, and there was a proliferation of inspired writings, and in effect the church said we can't cope with all this inspiration. We have to put a stop to it. And so the canon was established. Now the basis of the canon was not those books which were considered to be inspired, because there are lots of books which claim inspiration for themselves which were excluded: First Clement, Ignatius, and so on, Polycarp. So the problem in the first three centuries was a problem of inspiration. They had too much of it, and so the criterion for canonicity was really apostolicity, that which is considered to be factual and true as accorded by eyewitnesses or those who were close to eyewitnesses. So that if I were a Christian living in the year 200, I would not believe in the truthfulness of the New Testament writings because of inspiration but because of their historicity, because of their closeness to the event. And if that is true in the year 200, I think it is still true in the year 2000. This does not deny inspiration. The Bible says itself it is inspired. But in that paper I suggest that we don't even use the category of inspiration, because nowhere is it explained what inspiration means. Augustine talked about a flute player, talks about plucking a harp. And there the dictation theory. But as far as the Lutheran Church is concerned, it is nowhere explained what inspiration means, and for that reason it is not a high priority item with me.

COMMITTEE: I am not sure before you go on that you answered my question. What difference then do you see between—

PROF. E: The difference is, I was not at the open tomb.

COMMITTEE: O. K., the closeness to the event.

COMMITTEE: And the role of the Spirit in this, in the giving of this historical testimony.

PROF. E: The Scriptures are they which testify to Jesus of Nazareth, and the Spirit assures me that this is true, and I believe the category of inspiration is more in terms of content and process that they are inspired, they are God-given, they are Spirit-given, and the role of the Spirit has assured me that what is in those 27 or 66 books is true. And really I take it on faith anyway. I don't believe in the message of the Scriptures because it can be demonstrated, but I believe by faith.

Faculty Statement to Graduates Pentecost 1972

A Parting Peace, Section III

May the Holy Spirit,
Whom the Father sends in Jesus' name,
Bring these words to your remembrance:

"WHAT 'THE HOLY SPIRIT . . . WILL TEACH YOU' IS
WHAT 'I [JESUS] HAVE TOLD YOU' FIRST OF ALL."
(John 14:26)

To the apostles Jesus promised the Spirit, and inspired they were. Let us all in Synod remember how blessed we are to have the inspired Word of inspired men, even as we

disagree or fail to understand each other in our efforts to understand that inspiration. And we dare to appeal to all in Synod to bear with one another as together we pray the inspiring Spirit to enable us to grasp aright this inspired Word. We say it again, "the apostles and their word are inspired." About this inspiration we would emphasize one thing especially: the Spirit's link to the historical Jesus Christ. It was Jesus who sent Him and it is Jesus to whom He testifies. The Spirit who inspired the disciples is the same Spirit who had been promised by Jesus. It is that Spirit who led them to remember the things they had witnessed previously and the words the historical, visible and audible Jesus had told them beforehand (John 14:25-26, 29).

Jesus promised his disciples that the Spirit "will teach you everything, and call to mind all that I have told you." The Holy Spirit did not inspire these apostles in a vacuum, without their first experiencing history the way everyone else does, not without their prior knowledge of history, especially Biblical history. Indeed not! For as Peter and John explain, their inspiration enabled them to understand and announce what they had already witnessed: the common events of the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus. These were the previous historical things they had seen and heard (Acts 2:32; 4:24). Their inspiration was inextricably tied to history with all its ambiguities (Acts 1:21-22).

At times we are tempted to adopt a one-sidedly vertical view of inspiration that shrinks from any real connection with history. This temptation arises out of the anxious desire to protect the reliability of the Holy Scriptures. We may even be led to believe that the only way to insure the apostles against error is to assume that they did not depend, as we all do, on common historical experience and sources of knowledge. But this view of inspiration is born of fear; it does not trust the Holy Spirit to work through the kind of historical circumstances and people we know from our own experience. Yet history and flesh are the very creations God used in the incarnation of His Son.

Such a fear-full understanding of inspiration is but a short step from what the Smalcald Articles call "enthusiasm," the claim that the Spirit comes apart from "the external Word." "For even to Moses God wished to appear first through the burning bush and the spoken Word. . . ." (Part III, xiii, 3, 11). This tendency toward "enthusiasm" is one that continues to rise within us and among us. It by-passes the historical Jesus Christ and minimizes the disciples' first hand acquaintance with "Jesus of Nazareth, a man . . . made known to you through miracles, portents and signs" (Acts 2:22). The only inspiring Spirit who qualifies as Holy is that Spirit who comes to the disciples "in my [Jesus] name." It is this historical Jesus who promises to send the Spirit. And the function of that Holy Spirit who comes to the disciples is to "bear witness to Me [Jesus]," "whom I [Jesus] will send you." "Everything He makes known to you," says Jesus about the Spirit, "He will draw from what is mine" (John 14:26; 15:27; 16:7, 14).

Prof. F Transcript

pp. 12—20

COMMITTEE: Well, I had an opportunity to be in your class on our last visit, and what I heard I liked, and then you gave me the shocker. Your last sentence was: "Now in the next lesson I will talk to you about the inspiration of tradition." And the shocker was, I couldn't be here that following lesson, I had to get back to my parish. Now I am sure Dr. X and the four men of the committee will not mind if I repeat what I said in a previous session and that is: Do you give to your students a different interpretation of *θεόπνευστος* when you speak of the body of books we recognize as the canon and *θεόπνευστος* as it appears in later writings? Would you for instance put on the same level the inspiration of Matthew, inspiration of Paul in his epistles, and Clement, who uses the same term *θεόπνευστος*, and say all these are human documents, Matthew, Paul, Clement, and they all have to be judged according to the same standard? See, I wasn't in that next lesson.

PROF. F: Right, I wish that you had been. The specific phrase you introduce is a phrase that I use in titling a lecture of mine that I delivered first of all at Webster College and to some pastoral conferences. I delivered it at the Southeastern District, Dr. X will remember; then I used it at Dearborn at a pastoral conference. I always at the pastoral conferences use it in connection with another lecture of mine about the development of the canon and how these books came

to be the ones set aside in the community as special. The paper, "The Inspiration of Tradition," which I submitted to the committee and I am sure the committee has had a chance to look at, is in one sense—it might be helpful for you to understand that—is in one sense in its first part a popularization and rehash of my thesis, and only in the last couple of pages do I attempt to spin out some contemporary applications of it. So I think it would be helpful to you and to me if I dealt with it precisely in that way. It is in the first part a historical study of the fathers, and in fact, as I say, that is what I spent two years of my life doing. Looking at the fathers from this perspective, how in that period in which the New Testament documents came to be set aside by the community, how did the concept of inspiration function for them in this process. When we talk about canonization—and all of us I guess learned at seminary and asked what were the criteria of canonicity—we talk about wide usage in the community, apostolicity and antiquity and orthodoxy and so forth, and note that for instance inspiration is not usually put in this number of things that one uses as criteria of canonicity. Well, that interested me. Why is that? And what I found as I investigated the fathers is that they affirmed with great emphasis—you can find that in hundreds of places—they affirmed the inspiration of Paul, Matthew, to use the examples you used. They would not have included these documents within their list of writings of the New Testament had they not considered them to be inspired by God's Spirit. However, what I did find was that these fathers did not seem to restrict the idea inspiration to only those documents that they considered to be, let's say, a part of their New Testament; that they were able to use inspiration terminology also for other writers. I use some examples in the paper: for instance I used the example of Gregory of Nyssa saying about his brother Basil's commentary on the first six days of creation, that it was given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He uses the term *θεόπνευστος* there, the same term used in 2 Timothy 3:16. There are many other instances. I would be glad to discuss any specific instance with you. So as far as what I found in the fathers was concerned, they saw the inspiration of the Scriptures as part of a much wider activity of the Holy Spirit in the community, and of course we have always said that, that the Holy Spirit operated in many ways in the community. We affirm that with joy. But that it seems that at least as I studied them that they also used this same inspiration terminology of writings of other fathers, in some cases about themselves and so forth, and did not on the basis of inspiration, at least as far as I could see (this is a historical study; maybe he didn't see all the texts; in fact I know he didn't see all the texts). That they did not distinguish let's say a writing of Paul from one of their own writings by saying, Well, what we want to say about Paul is *θεόπνευστος*; what we want to say about ourselves, well, we are real pious men who are in the church and so forth, we write nice things, but surely we wouldn't use that term. Sometimes they did use that term. I would just finally, to finish my answer, would want to say that it does not mean that they did not distinguish between a writing of Paul and their own writings—they of course did; that they didn't distinguish between the Gospel of Matthew and one of their own writings—of course they did. That is what canonization is all about. And if you go on to ask them, Well, on what terms did they make these distinctions? Well, then you have to talk about I suppose the individual fathers. The fathers I studied most carefully and know the best talked very frequently about the documents that came from the ancient period of the church's life, that came from apostles, that were handed on in and to the community by apostles. This was central to them. So Gregory of Nyssa would not say of his brother Basil's commentary it was written by an apostle, because it was obvious to him that it wasn't.

COMMITTEE: So you would not say "inspired therefore in the canon," but "in the canon—"

PROF. F: "and therefore inspired."

COMMITTEE: Can I get a little clarification here? Because I don't think I have got it yet. Just a series of questions to try to sharpen this in my mind so we can clearly understand you. First of all, the fact that a man might claim for himself or his brother or his mother, for that matter, inspiration, does that necessarily mean that the church accepted his claim?

PROF. F: Not necessarily. In the New Testament itself we have indications of the fact that one needs to try the Spirit. From the beginning in the Christian community it was a problem that some people might not in fact be speaking by the Spirit; and that is a good question because it is precisely, too, the kind of thing I found in this study, namely, that when the Christian community in the early years did say of somebody, You are not speaking by the inspiration of the Spirit, what they often were saying is that you are a heretic. And in fact the best example I know of this, the text I developed at some length in my thesis from Origen, is the passage where he contrasts the Gospel in the Scriptures of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and says they wrote by the Holy Spirit; but the heretical Gospel writers, Basilides, and the Gospel according to the Twelve are written apart from the grace of the Holy Spirit because these are documents that pervert the Gospel.

COMMITTEE: All right, now is it possible then that the term inspired as used by Paul in 2 Timothy and as used by the fathers in various other contexts had different meanings? In other words, you may, some grandma may say your sermon was really inspired today. Now she may use exactly the same terminology, but she sure doesn't mean that the Holy Spirit took over and that what we have is on an equivalency with Scripture as far as every last word we said. But is that the case in the ancient community?

PROF. F: Certainly any word that we are investigating can be used in a number of senses, and in a study of the kind that I did, I had constantly to ask myself that question. Were they using the term at one time with a kind of special precision in regard to certain people, more loosely in regard to let's say themselves or to some others in the later community? Let me simply acknowledge that is certainly a possibility. As I looked, I looked for many things but for instance where they said inspired and noninspired. I also looked for places where they said different degrees of inspiration, you know, this kind of thing that we are talking about is not inspired to the same degree and in the same way as something else. I also didn't find those kinds of tests. So yes, it is a possibility. I would want to say I guess in talking about your sermon that the Holy Spirit is operative in the words that you speak. I wouldn't want to go into the pulpit if I didn't believe that.

COMMITTEE: Excuse me, in the same sense that when the New Testament in many instances talks about the Old Testament and says David through the Holy Spirit said and so on—in the same sense?

PROF. F: I am not sure I know a reason to doubt that. And again, that doesn't mean that I am putting myself on a par with the psalm writers any more than I want to put myself on a par with Paul or Matthew, because I am not on a par with them, and my witness to the Gospel under the guidance of the Spirit in this time depends on their apostolic witness—the witness that they have because they are related to that central time and that central person where God in the last days spoke through His Son.

COMMITTEE: You are distinguishing a difference in authority then. I mean, if Paul says something, you can't very well argue with it. You must accept it, or can you? If I say something, you may very well contest it. Would you observe that distinction?

PROF. F: In the case of Paul and in your case I would try very hard to understand your words, and I would try to take them with great seriousness as you speak as a Christian preacher from the pulpit and you proclaim the Gospel, I guess I couldn't quibble with you. I would accept this as the Gospel.

COMMITTEE: On the basis that what I say coincides with Scripture. That is a different basis. You are not—

PROF. F: That is a good place to introduce the fact that it is very helpful, I believe, to talk about the Scriptures in their normative function, and I think this is a very helpful thing to say that I very joyfully say. And the danger—and I recognize this, and I have often talked about it—the danger in talking about the inspiration of God active in the Christian community at this time, or at least one of the dangers with it, is that any number of people who are in the church can say any number of things and claim that they are speaking by the inspiration of the Spirit and maybe mislead the people of God. But you see, first of all that danger exists

completely whether they want to use the word inspiration of their present activity or not. Anyone in the Christian community who speaks as a minister of Jesus Christ can say, "This is God's Word to the community, the Holy Spirit is guiding me to say it," even if he doesn't use the term inspiration. And we always have to test the Spirit. As I said, they did in the first century.

COMMITTEE: In terms of the *norma normans*?

PROF. F: Yes, the norm for me is the prophetic and apostolic witness in the Scriptures because of the special relationship these documents bear to God's action in the period of His ancient people Israel and in regard to His definitive action in Jesus Christ. And these are normative for me; and anything that I would say in that paper, "The Inspiration of Tradition," that would give someone the idea that I regard my letter as of the same value as First Corinthians or do not regard the Scriptures as normative for my teaching, I would want to correct that impression.

COMMITTEE: Well, just to sweep away some of the things I don't think are a matter of great concern, such as whether inspiration in the canonization because you said that they didn't think they were inspired they would not have been in the canon, or to wipe away the idea whether Clement thought he was inspired, or even the early church. Can we make a distinction in terms of inspiration, I think was the original question. You said we make a distinction, but I felt maybe implied the distinction was only chronological. So the question is: When you say normative, is it normative because there is something that happened at that time through God's direction and these writers that was a special supernatural thing that we call inspiration? Or is it normative and more normative than X's word or mine only chronologically because they were closer to the event than we are, so the normative thing is not normative in the sense that they need to be even, what, historical sections, factual, but that these men were closer to the event than you and I are? Is that where the normative characteristic comes in, or the difference in the normative quality — their closeness to the event?

PROF. F: These documents are for me normative for many reasons. They are authority, and their normative character takes its starting point from the fact that I acknowledge Jesus Christ as normative. Of all the events in history from the very beginning until today, what God did through Jesus of Nazareth was His special grace, His special love. And insofar as that action was normative and insofar as the Christian community of which I am a member lives out of a faith in those events, especially in the death and the resurrection, those documents which this community saw to come from the apostolic witness to these events they have regarded as normative. As a member of this community I freely and fully acknowledge them. This is the litany that the fathers have again and again. Cyril of Jerusalem —

COMMITTEE: Excuse me. We are fighting time here, and we have more men. But just one more thing. I think the heart of Dr. X's question was and is: Is there anything different about the inspiration of let's say Paul, Peter, Luke, qualitatively different than the inspiration that you and I might have, the Spirit working on us? And we ask you, is there anything supernatural about it, or is this all purely through natural means? Other than chronological? Yes, other than chronological.

PROF. F: I understand the term inspiration to mean that God by His Spirit is active, the term, for instance, *θεόπνευστος* talks about God-breathed. That is surely something that goes beyond that which a man in his own capacity and facilities can do or say. He is affirming that he is speaking by the Spirit of God. That is what inspiration is about. That it is God's Spirit that is involved. God's Spirit, all of us in the room I think would affirm, is involved in our faith in Jesus Christ. No man can say Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit. That is, if you would like to use that term, a supernatural affirmation on your part and mine that Jesus is Lord.

COMMITTEE: Now the Scriptures — the Confessions speak of the Scriptures as being infallible because of their inspiration and so on as well as their content. [Prof. F: He stopped here, and I asked if that was a question to me. I wanted to ask for a reference in the Confessions.] Would you say that about our inspiration, would you use the word inspira-

tion? See, he is asking what is the difference between his being inspired, Dr. X being inspired, and Luke being inspired. Is there any difference other than the proximity to the events and the availability of firsthand information? Is there any other qualitative difference between the two kinds of inspiration?

PROF. F: I would simply say that I have to answer that question in two ways. Answer one, and that I am really well informed about insofar as I am informed about anything is the historical answer. I do not believe that the early church distinguished between the inspiration of the Biblical writers and their own inspiration. I may be incorrect, I welcome texts being shown to me, and so forth. The second question would have to be to update this what I think is a historical observation about the fathers, and I would have to say that one could deal with that in a couple of ways. One could say perhaps, for new reasons in the history of the church it might be helpful to the community to give up that particular way in which the fathers looked at the thing. That is quite possible. It would also be possible that we can find evangelical and kerygmatic strength from affirming what the fathers seem to have affirmed. I don't find the fathers distinguishing Matthew's inspiration from Basil's. They do distinguish these two documents, the authority of these men, the significance of these documents in the community, and I do too.

COMMITTEE: What was the source of their authority?

PROF. F: What was the source of — ?

COMMITTEE: You said that they distinguished the authority of these men. What was the source of their authority?

PROF. F: Of Paul's authority or Matthew's authority? Jesus Christ, they are bearing witness to Jesus Christ. They are bearing apostolic witness. That is the source of their authority.

COMMITTEE: And Basil's source?

PROF. F: The source of Basil's authority would be the same: Jesus Christ. And Basil would recognize that when he speaks about his Lord and about faith, he is speaking as a member of a Christian community which from its beginning lived out its witness on the basis of the testimony of the apostles. So that the source of his authority would be Jesus Christ also. His authority would be normed by the apostolic witness to Jesus Christ.

COMMITTEE: I don't wish to be unkind, but you know when I asked you about what you think, whether there is a difference, you always go back to 140. We are not living in 140; whether the church fathers, or even whether the 16th century; now I am asking about the difference that you see between my inspiration and Paul's inspiration, whether this is more than a difference in time.

PROF. F: That is not an unkind question at all. I am sorry if I have been misunderstood. I do not think that we need to distinguish between your authority — I am sorry — between the inspiration with which you proclaim the kerygma of our Lord Jesus Christ and the inspiration with which Luke or Paul does. I do not use, I don't know your writing, sir. I don't [COMMITTEE: I hope you don't use my writings as you do Luke's.] No, and I don't, I don't use your writings as normative in the way I use theirs, because the church has set these documents apart because God has given to the church these special documents which do bear distinctive character. I guess what I am saying, so I'm not misunderstood, that I thought the fathers didn't distinguish on the basis of inspiration between their writing and writing in the New Testament. I think that we could still perhaps talk in those terms as long as we safeguarded ourselves, and if that paper failed to do that, maybe that is where it needs to be reevaluated, as long as we safeguarded ourselves from in any way downplaying the significance of that central person Jesus Christ or those central documents of the Scriptures or in any way downplayed the fact that the Holy Spirit is living and witnessing today. I guess that is what I am trying to say when I talk about these things because sometimes I think we miss that.

COMMITTEE: All right, we've got one last question. X has had his hand up and we'll honor that; then that is the ending.

COMMITTEE: How do you test spirits if both sides are claiming inspiration?

PROF. F: Very, very carefully and very, very hesitantly. I guess again there are all kinds of examples of ways the community has done this. We probably wouldn't use the way that was used in the *Didache*, where they said if a prophet came and stayed a day or two receive him as the Lord; if he stays three days, he is a false prophet. I guess I wouldn't do it that way. I suppose the First Epistle of John could provide some good insights here. Because there he is talking about what the Spirit does and does not say, and he says that any man who denies that Jesus Christ came in the flesh, this is the anti-Christ, so as I supposed we would talk about the way in which a man who claims to be speaking by the Spirit, and this is really, it is somewhat immaterial to your question whether we use the term inspired or just say he claims to be talking by the Holy Spirit. We still have to test the spirits. And we try on the basis of his affirmation of the Gospel and its focus in Jesus Christ, and I suppose we would also apply those kinds of tests which the New Testament also tells us about when it talks about false prophets, talks about knowing them by their fruits.

COMMITTEE: How about testing them by the canon of canonical Scripture?

PROF. F: Yes, indeed; yes, indeed.

COMMITTEE: What would be the unique quality? Why appeal to canonical Scripture? On the basis of its apostolicity and its antiquity? If I'm equally inspired as they are, maybe contemporary inspiration is better than ancient inspiration.

PROF. F: I think that my starting point for an answer there would be to say, that I surely would affirm the continuing activity of the Spirit of God in our present age. I wouldn't be interested in God if He wasn't working in my time.

COMMITTEE: Is He working to produce more inspired Scriptures?

PROF. F: No. He is working to continue to bear inspired witness to Jesus Christ. So what I would want to say is: I would want to safeguard two things: that God's Spirit is actively at work in our time, in our community, and at the same time would want to affirm that those events that took place in conjunction with Jesus of Nazareth in the first century that centered in His death and His resurrection are the focal events of human history. That is why those documents are especially important to me. I think the way to put this together is to look in the closing chapters of John's Gospel. He says He is going to send the Spirit, who will lead you into all the truth; that's a continuing activity. At the same time the other thing He says is: He will bear witness of Me, and I would be very suspicious of any view that didn't take both of those seriously. The Spirit leads into truth, and He does it insofar as He bears witness to Jesus Christ.

Prof. G. Transcript

pp. 27-28

COMMITTEE: Let me sharpen it up. Suppose somebody says on the basis of a form criticism that he thinks that — well — take any story you want, but let's say Christ walking on water. Say I don't think He walked on water really; this is something that was written in by the church in order to show that He is really God. And what better way to do it to show that He is a God of nature? And that is really what that means: He is a God of nature, and we are quite sure that, although the text is clear and says He walked on water, that really that is something that is written in and not historical, didn't happen. Now is this not a violation of this control here, the authoritative Word is canonical?

PROF. G: Let me first of all affirm that the walking on water presents no problem to me whatever and that I wouldn't take this particular route. Now let me try to defend the guy who may go that route whoever he may be. If I were to find in the literature of that period this kind of story told once or twice or three times, then I in full honesty would have no choice but to ask myself: May this have been a literary device used for a certain purpose? This is not the final answer.

COMMITTEE: Applying that to the virgin birth, I am told — and I am not a scholar in that area — that there are parallels Egyptians and Greeks the virgin birth. Well, applying that

to the story of the virgin birth, would you then question whether or not that is to be accepted as historical?

PROF. G: I would question that and then would affirm it, but that is where the problem arises. Vergil, as you know, in his Eighth — Fourth Epilogue something about the divine savior Augustus virgin born. So — classic example where in non-Christian literature the literary device "virgin born" is a way of affirming the unique power and heroism of Augustus. Julius Caesar claimed to be son of Venus, I think, built a temple to her somewhere along the line. At any rate they are all doing this. Then in all historical honesty I need to ask myself the question: Is it possible that a Jewish rabbi has picked up this motif and built it into the Gospel? As I wrestle with this question, I am tremendously helped by the ancient tradition of the church, which has always said we have found it desirable, wise, necessary to affirm the virgin birth. I don't know what logical principle that I could use to prove the virgin birth beyond debate. At some point in some way I have to fall back on my faith, my belief.

Prof. XX

"Scriptural Authority Among Lutherans"
Lutheran Forum, Oct. 1968, pp. 13-14

It is tempting to reject the term "verbal inspiration" because of the magical unevangelical connotations with which it is freighted. However "inspiration" in some form has a long history reaching back to the Bible and has become common coin both inside and outside the Lutheran Church. If we do not reject the term, we must interpret it in another way than the scholastics, Flacius, Calvin, Philo, and Plato have done. 1 Corinthians 12:3 leads in the right direction: "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit." To the natural eye and mind Jesus of Nazareth with his cross is foolishness and weakness. But the Holy Spirit works, creates, "inspires" the conviction that this Jesus is none other than the Lord — the power of God and the wisdom of God. The notion is too scandalous to be arrived at by a logical and rational argument. When a person believes in his heart and confesses with his lips that Jesus Christ is Lord of all — that man's faith and words are inspired.

Prof. U Transcript

pp. 5-8

COMMITTEE: Well, since you spoke about all God and all man, how do you view inspiration then as far as a concept is concerned in connection with your view of Scripture as the Word of God?

PROF. U: Well, I believe that what the Bible, or what the apostles and the Bible say about — I'm getting hung up on the syntax here; let me start again, a better sentence: I believe that it is confessed about the Bible, in the Bible, that the Holy Spirit guided those men who wrote. It uses the word God, that the Scripture being God-breathed and that what it is asserting very strongly is that these men who wrote and who testified to the Gospel and who spell out the implications of the Gospel for the believer's life and to give us that decisive testimony to the faith, did this under God's guidance.

COMMITTEE: How was that different from the guidance that God would give to me for example in preparation of a sermon?

PROF. U: May I answer that this way: I am fully persuaded that when I or you or any other brothers in this room give a sermon, that we are guided and helped, encouraged and fortified and given our authority by God's Spirit. That is, I am saying that I in the sermon preparation I do, which often seems to be like scribbling notes on a piece of paper or reading the text or thinking about the people to whom I preach, that from one point of view what's going on there is intellectual or emotional work, and from another point of view it is God helping me. I am not sure that we can define the precise difference between the work of God's Spirit with me and the work with — in the Holy Scriptures. He certainly has had spectacularly better results in Holy Scripture than he does with many of my sermons, and I suspect with yours. But I'd rather leave that to say I boldly confess about both activities that God's Spirit is at work.

COMMITTEE: Getting back to X's adult catechumen here now though, he says: "Well, pastor, you—and you intimated this with your sermons and mine—you know it's very possible that in spite of the guidance and direction of the Spirit, being fallible human people, we are going to say some things that might not always be accurate. Now if I again say, you know, is this possible in connection with the Scriptures? Or again to restate the question—maybe you answered it: What is the difference between this Spirit-breathed operation and preparation and delivery of a sermon as opposed to the writing of Galatians or another canonical book?"

PROF. U: I suppose it would be rather arrogant for me to say what would be possible in God's operation with the Word, but I find it to be a fact that the Scriptures without fail point me to God and His love and my obligation to Him and my shortcomings. I'll leave it at that, I guess.

COMMITTEE: Just a second, before we get to X. Now, would you say that when Pastor X preaches a sermon, preaches the Gospel and so on, assuming that it's a pretty good sermon, what's the difference in authority between what he proclaims when he is, say, applying this—but I'm not saying when he is quoting Scripture, because then it's obvious that Scripture stands on authority—but what is the difference when he talks about the love of God or when he talks about Law, or whatever, in terms of what he says, or he writes an article, and what any of the apostles, evangelists, or prophets of the canonical Scriptures wrote? Is there any difference in the authority? In terms of, could you use that in the same way? Could you quote him and say: Well, now, X says, and because X says this, God says it, because you believe that X works under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Is there a difference—qualitative difference, between the Spirit working on him and the Spirit working on let's say St. Paul, the apostle?

PROF. U: I really think it's a rather hypothetical case. I doubt whether anybody would say of Brother X or of me that we are channels of special revelation or something like that. If you are talking about authority, ἐξουσία, a power to make whole, a power to bring people to Jesus Christ, which is what I think authority is really all about finally, God works with very "clayey" vessels sometimes, and I think

that, strange as it may seem, He has used me very effectively to bring people to faith, other people who have never heard me or any other preacher, may have read the Scriptures, and that He exercises His authority many ways, also through the Sacraments—

COMMITTEE: But now let's go back to the idea of the norm. Scripture is the *norma normans* we say. All the canonical books, these are God's Word. Is there any difference in the authority, there again if I'm quoting from, let's say, Paul's Letter to the Galatians or quoting from a devotional written by X? I'm not talking about if X uses Scriptural language. What I am saying is, is there any? And I suppose, to recast it, you find, I guess, it's Clement claims that he is inspired. He says, "I write this by the Spirit," and so forth. And so you have a whole concept of the inspiration of tradition, and you have the concept of the—perhaps what I say is on that same level. What I'm asking you, for your own personal opinion, do you hold, do you think that there is any difference between, let's say, the inspiration of the apostle Paul, the inspiration of yourself, or any other individual? Is there a qualitative difference? Is there a difference in terms of authority or norm? I'm not talking about power to convince, because when we preach obviously God, we are proclaiming the Gospel. This is a kerygma, and this is what does the job. We agree on it. But I'm talking of terms of a norm; you sit down and say: "Well, we want to find out what is the correct doctrine of such and such." Is there any difference in finding it in say a book that was written in the second century or finding it in, let's say, Mark's Gospel?

PROF. U: Yes. I think you've asked three question, really. One question you asked me about inspiration. I've answered that one. And we talked about authority; I think I've answered that one. The third question then is about norm, and I really do think there are three questions. As far as norm goes, I think it's manifest by my ordination vow that if I would read something in some work of Pastor X, who would say to me that man is saved by his works, and then I would read something then in St. Paul that *a priori*, I would before Paul anyway, and I would think that he would be decisive and I would, I would—I'll say it more clearly than that—I would take him as decisive, that he would be the decisive norm on that issue. Yes.

5b. The Findings Concerning The Inerrancy of the Scriptures

The majority of the faculty did not assert that in the process of inspiration God prevented the human frailties of the authors from introducing error into their writings. References are made regularly to the "human side" of the Scriptures.

It is, of course, correct to speak of the human side of the Scriptures. The Christian church has never regarded the human authors of the Scriptures as robots. The prophets, apostles, and evangelists spoke out of the situation in which they found themselves. Their writings reflect their personalities and characteristic literary styles as well as other individual properties. However, on the basis of 2 Peter 1:21 the church has taught that God moved these men so that their words were the words He wanted written. On occasion God gave direct revelation to the holy writers. Thus the words were God's words, and in the process the human authors were protected from error of any kind.

The *Statement on Scripture* adopted by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in the 1959 convention states:

We condemn and reject any and all teachings and statements that would limit the inerrancy and sufficiency of Scripture or that deny the divine authority of certain portions of Scripture. Inspiration applies not only to such statements as speak directly of Christ but also to such as may seem very remote (e.g., in the field of history, geography, and nature). For since God is the Lord of history and has revealed Himself by acts in history and has in the Person of His Son actually entered into man's

history, the historical framework in which the Gospel message is set in Scripture is an essential part of the inspired Word just as much as the spiritual truths revealed in it. (*Reports and Memorials*, 1959, p. 484; *Proceedings*, 1959, p. 189, Resolution 3-6)

The Seminary faculty in significant numbers, however, equates the human side of the Scriptures with a capability of error in matters of factual content.

The majority of the faculty uses an abridged and limited concept of the inerrancy of the Scriptures. It is evident that the faculty's extensive use of historical-critical methodology is closely associated with a significant redefinition of the term "inerrancy." For the majority inerrancy no longer means that the Holy Spirit preserved the Biblical writers from making errors in the writing of the Scriptures. It means rather that God unerringly achieves His purposes through the Scriptures despite the mistakes and inaccuracies found in them. The Scriptures are regarded as trustworthy for the purpose of bringing men to faith in Christ. But this is the only way in which they are infallible.

The transcripts of the interviews show a careful avoidance of references to "mistakes" or "errors" in the Scriptures. However, discrepancies, apparent contradictions, in historical matters, etc., are handled as things to be expected in a document that, despite the influence of the Holy Spirit, partakes of the human frailties of the authors.

It should be carefully noted that faculty members allow for more than just factual imprecision. Nor are they only referring to scribal errors. A statement adopted by the Department of Exegetical Theology and subsequently endorsed by the Department of Historical Theology states: "The situation may for instance occur, and has occurred, where an honest application of the historical method (3, above) appears to uncover a discrepancy between the actual course of events (1, above) and the word about it preserved in the Scriptures (2, above)." (*Statement of Exegetical Methodology*, Dec. 9, 1970, under Point 4)

The Synod will need to decide if it will tolerate a view of the Holy Scriptures that questions the reliability of the Biblical record.

Typical views of various professors on the subject of inerrancy follow. In studying the issues, you may wish to see also Appendix IV: *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, especially Section IV, F, "The Infallibility of Scripture."

Documentation

Prof. I Transcript

pp. 17-19

PROF. I: Well, I was asking, Could he have said it? Of course he could have said it. What is important is to note the message that is in there, that He is the One who is to come, that is what is important, and that He does indeed do the work of healing the sick and of raising the dead and of enabling the blind to see and of preaching the good news to the poor. That was as true then as it is today, and it is as true today as it was then. That is the meaning of the coming of the Christ.

COMMITTEE: First, in reference to what you have just been saying and then going back a little bit, very true, that is the purpose, the heart and core of it, and that is what we need and surely must discover. But if we have a muddled, confused bungle of Scriptures, is that not going to defect in your thinking the whole credibility, precision, etc., of the Gospel content here?

PROF. I: Sure, as much as we have muddled, confused, bungled minds that are searching the Scriptures.

COMMITTEE: Do we have any of that bungling in the Scripture itself? Are they fumbling in their attempt to bring this witness to the Gospel of Christ?

PROF. I: Indeed not.

COMMITTEE: Then I think maybe you are coming closer to sharing—

PROF. I: As much as it is possible for human beings not to fumble. You know, St. Paul was as much a human being

as I, and it is kind of interesting to watch him in First Corinthians when he writes there, and he starts talking about, you know, my job was to preach the Gospel, I didn't baptize, and then he goes on, oh, wait a while, whoops, I forgot, I did baptize somebody, oh, yes, and there was that other family. You know. You know, he too is capable of—

COMMITTEE: Are you saying that the Holy Spirit did not preserve these men from error? Now, we haven't used the word error, but I think maybe it is the time to introduce it because it flows naturally from what you are saying. That in terms of this mumbling, in terms of this human frailty, that you would find mistakes, you would find errors, you would find lapses, you would find misconceptions in Old and New Testaments? Did He preserve them from it, or didn't He?

PROF. I: He didn't preserve them from being human. That is right.

COMMITTEE: So you are saying then that there may be errors of fact, there may be errors of history, there may be errors of geography, there may be errors of science, or rather not science, references of things of nature, there may be all kinds of errors of that kind in Scripture?

PROF. I: No, I think you are kind of overstating it.

COMMITTEE: Would you state it precisely then.

PROF. I: I think it is kind of interesting to figure out what you do with the discrepancies which are in the Scriptures. You know, I understand the dodge, the way out, the way that doesn't want to take the Scriptures seriously. The way

out is to say, Well, after all, if we have only had, if we only had the autographs, all of this would be settled for us. We don't have the autographs, so it must have been something in the transmission. Well, granted something can happen between the time of the autographs and the texts that we have before us, which are pretty darn early in the history of the church and very, very reliable as all the Scripture scholars have indicated. But what is that in Matthew where he is quoting Jeremiah and could probably mean Zechariah? I don't know how to explain it. One way is to say, Well, don't forget these were human beings who were functioning here.

COMMITTEE: Now, from that am I correct in concluding that when you say, Don't forget these are human beings who are functioning, that you are saying that here or there you may in fact have a text that is fallible?

PROF. I: I am saying that as far as I am concerned as a Lutheran one doesn't go from inerrancy to the conviction that the Bible is the Word of God.

COMMITTEE: This wasn't my point.

PROF. I: Well, I think it is terribly relevant. One goes from a conviction that it is the Word of God to the fact that the Bible is truthful as can be. The question of error —

COMMITTEE: Would you define truthful for me?

PROF. I: Ya, sure, it is the way it is.

COMMITTEE: In what context, truthful with respect to what? With respect to theology, things spiritual only, with respect to a happened event that is described?

PROF. I: With respect first of all to the basic message that the Bible intends us to receive. That basic message is about God and His dealings with our world and His condemnation of sin and His saving work in Jesus Christ and His ultimate will for men and for the world. That is what is crucial. Now I think that I will also want to say that the Bible is truthful in all other respects too. There is no reason for us to assume otherwise.

COMMITTEE: How do you put that together with the humanness that you are talking about?

PROF. I: Well, that's what I am saying is that it doesn't matter if a guy had a lapse of memory if indeed he did have one; it doesn't matter. What is critical about the chapter that talks about Jeremiah and the prophecy being fulfilled is not that the prophecy was fulfilled but that Jesus Christ was dying for the sins of the world in accordance with the Scriptures.

Prof. XX

"Scriptural Authority Among Lutherans"
Lutheran Forum, October 1968, p. 14

If it seems necessary in spite of all the dangers to use the adjective "inerrant" of the Bible, it is possible to invest the term with an evangelical content. The confessional view is that the Bible is true and unerring in its diagnosis of man's rebellion and fallenness (Law). And it is absolutely true in its declaration that Jesus is the Christ of God and that he is the real and living way set forth by God that men might live (Gospel). Law and Gospel may be contrary to reason and feeling and instinct, the sum and substance of the Bible may be scandalous to the natural man — yet faith affirms that the Bible is inerrantly true. It makes that affirmation in spite of the human and historical form of the concrete words of the Bible. Faith says that these words, in spite of their deficiencies from the point of view of human reason, are the voice of the God of our salvation.

In the scholastic view the Bible alone is inspired and inerrant, and it is therefore the sole authority in all matters of doctrine, history, science, and what have you. In the confessional or evangelical view every Christian is inspired when he believes in and bears witness to Jesus as Lord, and his inspired testimony is inerrantly true in spite of its human foolishness. That seems to some of the orthodox or scholastics to endanger the uniqueness of the Bible. But the confessional group agrees with Martin Luther's definition of the unique authority of the Bible: "It is the place where Christ proclaims Christ most purely." The Biblical testimony is primary and fundamental. It is the word of the

chosen eyewitnesses and authorized representatives of the Christ. It is the normative proclamation of the Law and the Gospel. It is the norm by which all later proclamation and teaching is judged. *Sola Scriptura* — "Scripture Alone" — not the Church or any agency or teacher of the modern Church — is the rule or judge of all church teaching.

Prof. D Transcript

pp. 21-22

PROF. D: I would want to give it a little bit of careful analysis before I wanted to make any kind of statement about it. One thing is clear. There is a historical dimension, there is a historical conditionness about the Biblical text. We are operating under certain conditions of history, conditions that have to do with time and place and people. And that condition is an important dimension. And historical criticism has tried to get at what are the precise conditions, if you will, of each one of the words that are spoken. Now God operates in and through the human conditionness. And the message and the truth of God which comes through, comes through that human condition. There are a number of principles comparable to that, you know. You simply need to read Fuerbringer's *Hermeneutics* to make that point clear. That is a traditional message, we have said. Now if maybe you say it a little strongly here because it maybe sounds as though because it is historically conditioned that somehow or another he is wrong.

COMMITTEE: He talks about human limitations, and he puts this in antithesis to the concept of the divine absolute, so if language means anything, it seems to me he is saying here that this approach basically is that the human limitations mean human mistakes of various kinds. He doesn't even say whether it is limited to facts or whether it involves theology, but he just says that it isn't all that divine absolute anymore.

PROF. D: Well, one thing —

COMMITTEE: If you would modify this, you are not in agreement with it, how would you modify that statement?

PROF. D: Well, one thing I would insist upon: the human limitations of the writers. We don't come and say the writers were suddenly taken out of their historical situation so that suddenly a man like Moses or Jeremiah [was] knew all about the atomic process today.

COMMITTEE: Well how about knowing all about what he wrote about?

PROF. D: Yes, he sure knew what he was writing about. He knew his time, he knew the details. And he was a man of his time! (And in that sense he is.) But he is also limited to his time. We don't suddenly make him somebody who knows all the philosophical jargon of the 20th century or some other time. In that sense 'limited,' a man limited to his time. At the same time God is working through him and through his conditioned situation, through his limitations, through his gifts, and God through His Spirit is working in time, the *zeitgebunden* character of Scripture is one of the principles of the Lutheran tradition that we have always insisted upon, and I think that is important. Now there may be if you suddenly set up human limitations in the sense of being that this man (was) simply didn't know what he was talking about, then of course it is a wrong statement.

Prof. D Transcript

p. 23

PROF. D: Well, I would assert that God gives us the truth and it is a reliable truth! And He insists, and I would insist, that we look at this text, that here you really hear what God is saying, and the truth of God will come through. The details of (that) historical and geographical matters may appear to our human reason to be clearly in conflict with what we know. Those facts certainly could be the case, but behind all of that we recognize that the Spirit of God is working. And I am not sure that I would say to somebody, "Look, here is a particular reference, and this particular reference certainly seems to stand in tension with the geographical knowledge, for example, that we have about certain persons." And if you look at again the CTR statement goes on to talk about precisely those questions. The human reason might call a deficiency in Scripture, something that might yet serve the purpose of God. I would talk about

limitations on the part of a writer. He is not made a super-man by virtue of the fact that God works through him.

Prof. XX

"The Meaning of Archaeology for the Exegetical Task"
CTM, Oct. 1970, pp. 519, 520, 534-5

p. 519

The very association of the two words *archaeology* and *theology*, or *archaeology* and *exegesis*, may cause tensions to arise among representatives of these disciplines. Such tensions, however, can be allayed as a better rapport between scientists and religionists is established. In order to do this archaeologists need to recognize that their task is to determine the nature of archaeological evidence and then to evaluate and to interpret to the best of their ability the evidence they have uncovered. Theologians and exegetes also need to recognize that if the Old Testament is used, it also has to be interpreted. Like archaeologists, exegetes must both determine the Biblical evidence and then evaluate and interpret it to the best of their ability. Both archaeologists and exegetes must be ready to alter their views in the light of each other's evidence and to recognize the reality of the problems in both areas, and they must be concerned to see whether suggested solutions are acceptable or not.

p. 520

A competent Biblical scholar must give equal weight to both the literary and the archaeological evidence. It is an easy way out to insist that the Biblical evidence must be infallible and that therefore the archaeological evidence must be adjusted to conform to it. Humanly speaking such evidence as potsherds, walls, and destruction layers are more reliable than Biblical texts that call for interpretation in all of their diversity. As a matter of fact objects as well as texts need to be interpreted if Biblical history is to be understood properly. One type of evidence needs to be brought into relation with other types of evidence and then modified and even corrected accordingly. It is probably correct to say that the archaeologist turns to the literary evidence of the Bible more readily and openly than the student of the Old Testament turns to the evidence of archaeology for a solution. The theologian who works unilaterally with his text faces a host of intangibles: the identity and personality of its author, the additions or omissions that have been made during the course of the transmission of the text, and the often limping character of his own presuppositions and biases. In summary the archaeologist should take seriously the evidence and its soberly thought-out interpretation that the theologian offers, and the theologian should take with equal seriousness the evidence and the proposed interpretation of it that the archaeologist presents for consideration. But how is that to be done?

p. 534

The ages of 75 and 100 years ascribed to Abraham may well indicate the high esteem that later generations had for the founder of their faith. By the same token the ages of an Adam or a Methuselah may not be listed for the purpose of stacking them up in succession in order to arrive at a chronological sequence for dating the world; rather these great ages may have the purpose of showing the unbroken continuity of the divine promise to the human race. From the very beginning there was a chain of men who carried the traditions so that the continuance of the divine promise might be assured.

pp. 534-5

More difficult is the anachronism in Gen. 21:34 where Abraham is described as sojourning a long time in the land of the Philistines. It is a well-documented fact that the Sea Peoples including the Philistines did not appear on the scene of history until the 12th century B.C. How then could it be said of Abraham (1700 B.C.) that he stayed in the Philistine lands for many days? It appears that the author of this Genesis text was writing from the later geographical viewpoint of his own day. If the author was the 8th-century Elohists, or if the verse is an addition from some other later tradition, there would be no problem because the Philistines would have made their impact on history by that time.

A number of difficulties arise in connection with the Exodus events and what is known about them from archaeology. A conflict has long been noted between the figure of

600,000 fighting men who departed from Egypt and the capacity of the Sinai peninsula to support that many people for 40 years. According to contemporary standards Sinai could take care of only 3,000 to 5,000 people. To resolve this conflict, Petrie suggested that the word for "thousand" (*alaphim*) should probably be rendered "families" or "tents," and Mendenhall has suggested "squad" or "companies." In the two censuses that were taken at Mount Sinai and in the plains of Moab those who were 20 years old and upward were counted, and both figures were slightly over 600,000 men (Num. 1:46; 26:2). Explanation for these large census totals has been sought in the later census of Israel taken at David's time (2 Sam. 24:9; 1 Chron. 21:5). It is suggested that in order to build up the significance of the Exodus and Sinai events, the priestly tradition in Israel transferred the numbers from the Davidic census to the Mosaic census. If the great Pharaoh Ramses II actually used only 20,000 fighting men in the memorable battle of Qadesh in Syria, then it would hardly be plausible for a small people like Israel (Deut. 7:6-8) to field 600,000 fighting men.

Prof. J Transcript

pp. 22-23

COMMITTEE: Is there anything in the Confessions or any of these here which indicate that "inerrant" in the sense of not deviating in any way, shape, or form from that which it corresponds to in reality, or corresponds to truth, was actually held by them? Or would it be correct to say that the confessors believed in an inerrant Bible in the sense of a Bible which did not make mistakes of any kind?

PROF. J: I, as I indicated in the article, would have difficulty in producing the evidence that they held the view that the Bible had no mistakes of any kind.

COMMITTEE: How about turning it around? That is what I am asking you.

PROF. J: As I said, it would be quite inappropriate to make an affirmation for which I do not have any historical evidence. I think—but this is only a suspicion—I think that, if you would have put the question to them, the off-the-cuff answer would have been "no," in the same way in which, if I did not suspect that there were ulterior reasons behind the questions being put to me, I think I would answer the same way.

COMMITTEE: A theologian not of our denomination recently said that "inerrant,"—and I don't know if he is referring to Lutheran Confessions or not—means that God does not lie and the Gospel is true but not in the sense of the Bible being an errorless book. Is that the way in which you take that statement from the Confessions, in the sense of Gospel-related thing, that God does not—

PROF. J: Well more than, to get back to the issue we talked about, I mean more than, I would say more than the narrow interpretation of Gospel. The totality of the Biblical revelation, I think, is involved here. I affirm that the God who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things. Now this is not an immediately Gospel-related affirmation, but I think that when the Holy Scriptures make this assertion that they do not go astray and they do not deceive.

COMMITTEE: Would historical accuracy be part of that? I am not talking now about numbers and things where scribal errors might enter in, but would historical accuracy be included in that?

PROF. J: Let's prescind from scribal errors, since you want to omit that. I think certainly the understanding of historiography in the period when the Sacred Scriptures were being put together was not our contemporary understanding of documented historiography of the kind that, alas, I am guilty of with as many footnotes as I put into my articles. There is not this kind of concern. It is not a part of the culture, and the Holy Scriptures are written by people who reflect the situation in which they find themselves.

Prof. XX

"What Does 'Inerrancy' Mean?"

CTM, Sept. 1965, pp. 580, 588, 591-2

p. 580

As long as we realize that "inerrancy" is used metaphorically of the Sacred Scriptures to describe them as "not

wandering away" from the truth, well and good; we are not likely to become quarrelsome about it in that case. But when we begin to take the term literally of the Sacred Scriptures as such, a student of comparative religion might be impelled to observe that we are perilously close to the threshold of a tendency which exists in other world religions. This is the tendency toward the deification of the written revelation of God. Certain schools of Jewish theology, for instance, have affirmed the preexistence and the divine nature of the Torah just as certain schools of Islamic theology have similarly affirmed the preexistence and the divine nature of the Qur'an.

p. 588

The preceding is not intended to provide an exhaustive, but merely a representative, list of problems. Every serious student of the Sacred Scriptures is aware of these and many other difficulties. Admittedly, it is possible to explain some or all of the cited difficulties to one's own satisfaction. But that they are genuine difficulties remains a fact attested by the volume of effort that Christian exegetes and systematians have expended in endeavoring to account for them from the days of the primitive church on. It may be an index to the gravity of the problem that we in our time have difficulty in finding a categorical label for these Scriptural phenomena. We quite properly shy away from "contradictions," "errors," and "mistakes." Yet such euphemisms as "paradoxes," "discrepancies," "disagreements," and "variations" are hardly better.

The fact is that the truth of the Sacred Scriptures is something to be evaluated in terms of their own criteria and of the qualities which they themselves exhibit. These qualities do not — speaking generally — include great precision in formulation, stenographic fidelity in reporting exact words, prosaic literalism in interpretation, bibliographically accurate citations of author and title, comprehensive documentation, carefully synchronized chronologies, a modern historiographic sense, harmonistically consistent adjustment of sources to one another, and meticulously exact descriptions of attendant historical, physical, and other scientific details. These were not generally the qualities of the men or of the cultures which the Holy Spirit employed, and where these qualities are absent in the Sacred Scriptures, this, too, is a mark of the Holy Spirit's condescension and accommodation not to error but to humanity. Admittedly the picture of the Sacred Scriptures that emerges when all these factors are taken into account is likely to be less tidy than a purely theoretical construct, but it is also likely to be more realistic, more correct, and more genuinely truthful.

Are we not finally most reverent if we say that many of the matters that detractors of the Sacred Scriptures have decried as error are accidental to the divine revelation and do not affect its substance and if we then affirm, "Nevertheless, the Sacred Scriptures are without any qualification the Word of God and, by God's own declaration, true"?

Whether we retain the term "inerrancy," however, or content ourselves with affirming that the Sacred Scriptures are God's Word and true, it is essential that we approach this thesis from the a priori of our baptism and with a clear appreciation of the self-declared purposes of the Sacred Scriptures and with a serious effort to appreciate the purpose of the individual author.

God has given us a revelation of His being and of His purpose in the Sacred Scriptures to enlighten us in our native darkness (Ps. 119:105); to create and establish in us faith in Christ, as God's Son (John 20:21); to provide us with instruction (*διδασκαλία*), to reprove us, to correct us, to train us in righteousness, that as men of God we may be complete, equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16); to give us the right mind-set (*νοῦθεσία*, 1 Cor. 11:11); to provide our hope with encouragement (*παράκλησις*, Rom. 15:4) and for other religious ends. He did not give us His revelation to satisfy our curiosity (even about spiritual things) or to give us information about the subject matter of secular disciplines like geography, mathematics, history, astronomy, physics, and genealogy.

Prof. XX

Form and Meaning of the Fall Narrative
Concordia Seminary Print Shop, St. Louis, Mo., 1965, p. 26

The author takes the position that the writer of Genesis 2 and 3 is writing centuries after Moses. He is relating the traditions of the fall of man to his own day. The author further assumes the principle that miracles are not to be multiplied. Therefore he concludes that the author searched the traditions as a historian and as did Luke (Luke 1:1-4). It is evident that he concludes that there was no miracle, i.e., no revelation from the Spirit of what actually happened in the garden. Indeed in the book he makes clear that he believes there was something that happened, but we cannot penetrate back to the events themselves. He takes the Genesis 2-3 account to be symbolic rather than "annalistic." It is not, in his opinion, to be regarded as a historical report.

5c. The Findings Concerning The Authority of the Scriptures

All members of the faculty teach that the Gospel is the key that opens the door to the correct understanding of Scripture, but a majority also maintains that the Gospel makes the Scripture authoritative. They do not speak of any other content being authoritative simply because it is found in the Scripture.

Thus the authority of the Bible is based not so much on its divine origin but on the fact that the Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation." In practice, then, the Gospel becomes the norm, or standard, for theology.

For some members of the faculty the authority of the Scriptures is limited to what is connected with the doctrine of salvation through Christ (soteriology). Biblical texts not directly related to salvation are considered outside the area where doctrinal agreement is necessary. In this view, for example, to deny the reality of man's fall into sin is wrong only because it impinges on the Gospel, not because it contradicts the Biblical text. It is, however, not considered wrong to question the literal and historical nature of the Genesis 3 record. Divergent views on the historicity of clearly revealed Biblical texts are permitted so long as the Gospel is not impaired in the process.

It is also asserted that it is "un-Lutheran" to ask, "What does the Bible say?" A study of the transcripts demonstrates a paucity of the answer: "It is written."

The point commonly made by the majority of the faculty is that the Scriptures derive their authority *exclusively* from the Gospel. The proposition that the Gospel as *God's Word* does not derive its authority from the fact that it is given to us in the inspired Scriptures is thought to negate the proposition that the Scriptures have authority in themselves because they are inspired by God. Thus a "both/and" is changed without Biblical basis into an "either/or."

Lutherans have always taught that the Scriptures are authoritative *both* because they are bearers of God's own Gospel word of pardon *and* because their entire content is God's inspired Word. Scripture alone (*sola Scriptura*) is at the same time all of Scripture (*tota Scriptura*).

Gospel or Scripture?

It is important to observe that the Lutheran Confessions ask two questions concerning a given doctrine or practice: 1. What does it do to the Gospel of God's free grace toward sinners in Christ Jesus? 2. Does it have Biblical foundation? The *Apology* rejects invocation of saints both on grounds that it robs Christ of His honor (XXI, 14) and on grounds that it is "without proof from Scripture" (XXI, 15, 10). Luther rejects conflict with the chief article of our faith (*Smalcald Articles*, Part II, II, 1). But he holds that in the Lord's Supper the bread remains bread simply on grounds that this teaching "agrees better with the Scriptures," namely, 1 Cor. 10:6 and 11:28 (*Smalcald Articles*, Part III, VI, 5).

When there are clear testimonies of Holy Scripture, "we must simply believe it" (*Formula of Concord*, SD, VIII, 53 — German: "Das sollen wir einfältig glauben.")

While the symbols are always concerned about how a doctrine relates to the Gospel, nevertheless, in establishing doctrine they do not hesitate to appeal directly to the Scriptures for proof. They know that a doctrine firmly founded on the Scriptures cannot possibly be inimical to the Gospel. They are confident that Scriptures given to us *for the sake* of the Gospel do not teach doctrines *contrary* to the Gospel. Whatever is Biblical is in harmony with the Gospel. Whatever disagrees with the Gospel cannot be Biblical.

EXCURSUS ON THE LUTHERAN POSITION ON GOSPEL AND SCRIPTURE

An extended treatment of the relationship between the Gospel and the authority of the Holy Scriptures is demanded by the fact that this topic forms one of the principal issues arising from this investigation.

First let all understand that there is no doubt on the part of anyone that the Lutheran Confessions contend consistently that *all* Scripture should be divided into two chief doctrines: the Law and the Gospel. See the following quotations from the Confessions:

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Art. IV, 5, 6: "All Scripture should be divided into these two chief doctrines, the law and the promises. In some places it presents the law. In others it presents the promise of Christ; this it does either when it promises that the Messiah will come and promises forgiveness of sins, justification, and eternal life for his sake, or when, in the New Testament, the Christ who came promises forgiveness of sins, justification, and eternal life. By 'law' in this discussion we mean the commandments of the Decalogue, wherever they appear in the Scriptures. For the present we are saying nothing about the ceremonial and civil laws of Moses."

Apology, Art. IV, 372: "Whenever law and works are mentioned, we must know that Christ, the mediator, should not be excluded. He is the end of the law (Rom. 10:4), and he himself says, 'Apart from me you can do nothing' (John 15:5). By this rule, as we have said earlier, all passages on works can be interpreted. Therefore, when eternal life is granted to works, it is granted to the justified. None can do good works except the justified, who are led by the Spirit of Christ; nor can good works please God without the mediator Christ and faith, according to Heb. 11:6, 'Without faith it is impossible to please God.'"

Apology, Art. IV, 388: "As much as was possible here, we have pointed out the sources of this conflict and have explained those issues on which our opponents had raised objections. These will be easy for good men to evaluate if they remember, whenever a passage on love or works is quoted, that the law cannot be kept without Christ, and that we are not justified by the law but by the Gospel, the promise of grace offered in Christ."

According to Holsten Fagerberg, a Swedish authority on the Lutheran Confessions, Melanchthon's purpose in mentioning Law and Gospel at the beginning of his treatise on justification is to provide a background for the chief doctrine of the Reformation. "Melanchthon returns to the same theme later on in the fourth article of Ap (IV 183 ff.) and also in Ap XII 53, where he discusses the Evangelical doctrine of penitence. In these sections he is not talking about the authority of Scripture, and neither is he referring in the first place to the interpretation of Scripture in general; what he does have in mind is the Reformation's major doctrine, justification by faith alone, *sola fide* (Ap IV 73). The validity of this doctrine is under discussion in articles IV and XII of Ap. Melanchthon therefore sets up two aims for himself. He wants to demonstrate, first, that the Reformation doctrine of justification is Scriptural and, second, that it is consistent with the many seemingly contradictory statements in the Scriptures concerning the place of good works in the Christian life. Both of these views of the doctrine of justification go together naturally; justification is important because of its basis in Scripture, and it makes good sense of what Scripture says about salvation. But this doctrine is not a general key to the Scriptures. Instead of being the sole principle for the interpretation of the Scriptures, it provides the basic rule which clarifies the Scriptural view concerning the relation between faith and good works." (Holsten Fagerberg, *A New Look at the Lutheran Confessions (1529 to 1537)* [St. Louis: CPH, 1972], p. 36)

The Lutheran Confessions hold that the entire Bible deals with salvation through Christ (*Apology* IV, 83; XII, 65 ff.; XX, 2). The whole of Scripture is looked upon as a uniformly divine Word. The distinction between Law and Gospel, while highlighting the two principal teachings of Scripture, is not used by the Confessions to limit the questions one may address to the Scriptures. Fagerberg refers to the "unfettered view" of the Bible in the Lutheran Confessions. The confessions ask the Bible about the Lord's Supper, about the doctrine of the ministry, about marriage and celibacy, as well as matters of Christian vocation (Fagerberg, *ibid.*, pp. 39-40). All of these matters are settled on the basis that God's Word, the Scriptures, are authoritative because they are God's Word to man. There is no hint of the use of the Gospel as an interpretative, limiting principle. It is rather a presupposition that in the Scriptures one will find Law and Gospel and that they must be rightly divided.

In short, the concept that the Scriptures derive their authority from the Gospel is foreign to the Confessions. The whole of the Scriptures are regarded as authoritative and "unfettered."

Note also that the Reformers make crystal clear that the *Gospel is found in the Scriptures* and nowhere else. It is indeed the Gospel of God's mercy in Christ that the Lutheran Reformers stress even as we do today. But the Confessions make it crystal clear that we learn of the Gospel through the Scriptures.

Apology IV ("Justification"), 86 tells us: "Thus the Scriptures testify that we are accounted righteous by faith." In the same article, section 107, Melanchthon writes: "It is surely amazing that our opponents are unmoved by the many passages in the Scriptures that clearly attribute justification to faith and specifically deny it to works. . . . Do they suppose that these words fell from the Holy Spirit unawares?" A little later in Section 117 the author states again: "What we have shown thus far, on the basis of the Scriptures and arguments derived from the Scriptures, was to make clear that by faith alone we receive the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake."*

Again in section 188 of the fourth article of the *Apology*, Melanchthon states: "We must see what the Scriptures ascribe to the law and what they ascribe to the promises. For they praise works in such a way as not to remove the free promise."

It is inescapable that Melanchthon is appealing to the Scriptures as authoritative. Justification by faith is correct as the Lutherans teach it because the Scriptures "testify," "attribute," "ascribe." They are the "basis," and "arguments" are derived from them.

Note the Formula of Concord on this topic: "Our intention was only to have a single, universally accepted, certain, and common form of doctrine which all our Evangelical churches subscribe and from which and according to which because it is drawn from the Word of God, all other writings are to be approved and accepted, judged and regulated." (FC, Solid Declaration, Rule and Norm, 10)

The Reformers do not separate the power of the Scriptures and the Gospel, for their power is one. See the *Formula of Concord* (Solid Declaration, Art. XI, "Election," 76): "It is indeed correct and true what Scripture states, that no one comes to Christ unless the Father draw him. But the Father will not do this without means, and He has ordained Word and sacraments as the ordinary means or instruments to accomplish this end."

Cf. also Luther in the *Large Catechism* (Ten Commandments, 101): "When we seriously ponder the Word, hear it, and put it to use, such is its power that it never departs without fruit. It always awakens new understanding, new pleasure, and

* Italics added in quotations from the Confessions.

a new spirit of devotion, and it constantly cleanses the heart and its meditations. For these words are not idle or dead, but effective and living."

The *Formula of Concord* sets forth the matter with its usual clarity and crispness: "To this end, in his boundless kindness and mercy, God provides for the public proclamation of his divine, eternal law and the wonderful counsel concerning our redemption, namely, the holy and only saving Gospel of his eternal Son, our only Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Thereby he gathers an eternal church for himself out of the human race and works in the hearts of men true repentance and knowledge of their sins and true faith in the Son of God, Jesus Christ" (FC, Solid Declaration, II, 50). Nor is it true that the Reformers regard all items in Scripture as requiring connection with the Gospel to be authoritative. For example, compare the following citations from the Lutheran Confessions, where it is quite obvious that the authority of the Scriptures is resident in simply this, that it is God's Word.

Augsburg Confession, XXII, 1: "Among us both kinds are given to laymen in the sacrament. The reason is that there is a clear command and order of Christ, 'Drink of it, all of you' (Matt. 26:27). Concerning the chalice Christ here commands with clear words that all should drink of it."

Augsburg Confession, XXIII, 8—9: "Since God's Word and command cannot be altered by any human vows or laws, our priests and other clergy have taken wives to themselves for these and other reasons and causes."

Augsburg Confession, XXVII, 58—9: "That is a good and perfect state of life which has God's command to support it; on the other hand, that is a dangerous state of life which does not have God's command behind it. About such matters it was necessary to give the people proper instruction."

Augsburg Confession, XXVIII, 28: "St. Augustine also writes in his reply to the letters of Petilian that one should not obey even regularly elected bishops if they err or if they teach or command something contrary to the divine Holy Scriptures."

Augsburg Confession, Conclusion, 5: "... we have introduced nothing, either in doctrine or in ceremonies, that is contrary to Holy Scripture or the universal Christian church."

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, XXIII, 11: "Let us therefore keep this fact in mind, taught by Scripture and wisely put by the jurists: The union of man and woman is by natural right."

Apology, XXVII, 60: "Besides, examples ought to be interpreted according to the rule, that is, according to sure and clear passages of Scripture, not against the rule or the passages."

Smalcald Articles, Part II, Art. IV, 14: "When the teaching of the pope is distinguished from that of the Holy Scriptures, or is compared with them, it becomes apparent that, at its best, the teaching of the pope has been taken from the imperial, pagan law. . . ."

Smalcald Articles, Part III, Art. I, 3: "This hereditary sin is so deep a corruption of nature that reason cannot understand it. It must be believed because of the revelation in the Scriptures."

Large Catechism, Ten Commandments, 92: "Accordingly, I constantly repeat that all our life and work must be guided by God's Word if they are to be God-pleasing or holy."

Large Catechism, Ten Commandments, 116: "If God's Word and will are placed first and observed, nothing ought to be considered more important than the will and word of our parents. . . ."

Large Catechism, Ten Commandments, 311: "Here, then, we have the Ten Commandments, a summary of divine teaching on what we are to do to make our whole life pleasing to God. They are the true fountain from which all good works must spring, the true channel through which all good works must flow. Apart from these Ten Commandments no deed, no conduct can be good or pleasing to God, no matter how great or precious it may be in the eyes of the world."

Large Catechism, Lord's Supper, 31: "Although the work was accomplished and forgiveness of sins was acquired on the cross, yet it cannot come to us in any other way than through the Word. How should we know that this has been accomplished and offered to us if it were not proclaimed by preaching, by the oral Word? Whence do they know of forgiveness, and how can they grasp and appropriate it, except by steadfastly believing the Scriptures and the Gospel?"

See the following excerpts for documentation of the tendency on the part of a majority of the Seminary faculty to limit the authority of the Scriptures to their Gospel content and function. In view of the Biblical and confessional way of relating the Bible and the Gospel, the Synod must decide whether it wishes to have the authority of the Biblical Word diminished by the Gospel "reductionism" practiced at the St. Louis Seminary.

Cf. also Appendix IV: *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, Section IV, "C. The Gospel and Holy Scripture," and "D. The Authority of Scripture."

Documentation

Prof. XX

"Scriptural Authority Among Lutherans"
Lutheran Forum, Oct. 1968, pp. 13-14

Luther and the Confessions based the authority of the Bible not on a theory of a unique literary origin of the Bible but on the content of the Scriptures, namely, Law and Gospel. For Luther and the Confessions the Bible is authority because it judges and it pardons, it kills and it quickens. To recognize the authority of this book is to let oneself be judged and pardoned by its content. Jesus Christ in His life and death and resurrection vouches for the pardon and life promised in the Scriptures. Anyone who needs a further guarantee of the truth of the essential content of the Bible — say in a doctrine of a special origin — should ask himself why Jesus does not suffice.

It is tempting to reject the term "verbal inspiration" because of the magical, unevangelical connotations with which it is freighted. However, "inspiration" in some form has a long history reaching back to the Bible and has become common coin both inside and outside the Lutheran Church. If we do not reject the term, we must interpret it in another way than the scholastics, Flacius, Calvin, Philo, and Plato have done. 1 Corinthians 12:3 leads in the right direction: "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit." To the natural eye and mind Jesus of Nazareth with His cross is foolishness and weakness. But the Holy Spirit works, creates, "inspires" the conviction that this Jesus is none other than the Lord — the power of God and the wisdom of God. That notion is too scandalous to be arrived at by a logical and rational argument. When a person believes in his heart and confesses with his lips that Jesus Christ is Lord of all — that man's faith and words are inspired.

Prof. XX

Essay: "Authority of the Word" (1970)

II. Scripture and the Doctrine of the Gospel

Let's turn now to the second variation of our theme. We look again at the authority of the Word, this time by considering the relation between Scripture and the doctrine of the Gospel. In the confessional article of Synod's constitution we affirm that the Scriptures are for us "the only rule and norm of faith and practice." That is, they are the means by which we determine what we teach and believe and how we put our faith into practice in our lives. As the Formula of Concord puts it, the Scriptures are "the clear fountain of Israel," the well from which we draw the spiritual water of our teaching. What is it about Scripture that makes it normative for our faith and practice? Put briefly, the Scriptures are normative because they present the doctrine of the Gospel to us.

Prof. R Transcript

pp. 10-11

PROF. R: The example I have in mind (and this gets close to home so that we all recognize the pertinence of it for our own synodical work) is the example of Resolution 2-31 from the New York synodical convention. One reason I choose that, that is the resolution that deals with the Genesis questions, and one reason I fix upon that example is that that is a resolution I was in on at least for part of the discussion of the Committee on Doctrinal Affairs. Let me begin by recapping as well as I can remember how the various clauses of that resolution are spelled out.

COMMITTEE: Excuse me, with all due respect I was just kind of noticing that 45 minutes have gone by. If we could be a little more succinct. Now naturally you have to say what you have to say, but if we could be a little briefer in response, I think we would get a little more dialog in. But go ahead. I don't want to restrict you.

PROF. R: I may have bitten off a bigger example than I can be succinct with. But I will try. In this resolution — and I pick it not only because I had some involvement in it but also because it's a neuralgic point in controversial discussions within our Synod; the creation, the six days, the fall, the subsequent corruption of man and so on — in this particular resolution the first "whereas" says something

about whereas God in His almighty power created all things in six days by a series of creative acts — something like that. And the second one goes on to say something about man being the principal creature in this creation of God. And the third one says something about whereas man was created — excuse men — whereas Adam and Eve are real historic individuals, the first people of the human race created in the image of God. Another whereas goes on to say that whereas man fell and this was a historical event and, subsequent to his fall, the fallen sinner has been penalized with corruptibility. And then it goes on to the last whereas, before the "resolveds" begin. And it says, Now whereas all these previous whereases (whereas God created man in His own image and whereas man fell and was subsequently turned over to corruption because he fell) "therefore be it resolved."

Now I recall in the deliberations of that larger committee at New York, when the subcommittee reported this resolution out of the larger committee, I remember the discussion, and the question was raised from the floor to the chairman of the subcommittee, Why is it when you come to that last whereas and you say, Whereas God created man in His own image and whereas man fell and was subject to mortality because he fell, why didn't you in that kind of review, summarizing "whereas," pick up the points also of the six days, the historicity of Adam and Eve, the historicity of the fall? Why didn't you say about them what you did say about the other things, namely, that they are (now I quote) "essential to the pure and clear teaching of the Gospel"? You do say that whereas God's creating of man in His own image is "essential to the clear and pure teaching of the Gospel." And you say that man's fall into sin and his subsequent mortality is "essential to the clear and pure teaching of the Gospel." But why don't you say that the six days are essential to the clear and pure teaching of the Gospel? Or why don't you say that the fall as a historic event is "essential to the clear and pure teaching of the Gospel"? When the chairman of the subcommittee which had framed this resolution was challenged by that question, he said, "Oh, we could do that if you would like." And the people from the floor of the larger committee said, "Why don't you?"

Well, those of us who had the prestigious title of being "theological consultants," when the committee went into executive session, were excused from the chambers of the committee. So the next thing I knew about this resolution was when I was sitting out on the floor of the convention and it was being reported out to the plenary body. And do you know that as the resolution came out, it came out unchanged. There was no word about relating the six days or the historicity of Adam and Eve or the historic event of the fall to "the clear and pure teaching of the Gospel." Not to mention that the overtures to which this resolution was supposed to be the answer had (most of them) asked that some resolution be framed regarding the 24-hour lunar day. And the resolution doesn't say anything about that, about the 24-hour day.

Now I have my own explanation of this; I might be wrong. But I suspect that one reason we didn't link the six days, the historicity of Adam and Eve, the historicity of the fall to "the clear and pure teaching of the Gospel" was that we didn't know how we would do that. We could do that with God's creating man in God's image; that we could relate to "the clear and pure teaching of the Gospel." And we could relate man's fall into sin and his subsequent corruption to "the clear and pure teaching of the Gospel." But we didn't know, at least at this point in our theological vitality, we didn't know how you would link the other things to the Gospel. Now I don't say this — not at all, and I hope you don't misunderstand me — I don't say this at all in the spirit of ridicule. I do say it in the spirit of criticism. But it is a criticism under which we would all come, because I think it represents one of the dilemmas in which a church body also like ours finds itself that it wants to say the Biblical thing, that it also — and for this I would say, *Gott sei Dank!* — it also feels under evangelical obligation to say what it is the Scripture does say only if you can show how what the Scripture says is relatable to "the clear and pure

teaching of the Gospel." Now that I would take (and I am still speaking to your question), that I would take to be one of the fundamental projects of systematic theology. Another classic case of the very same thing would be our Lord's virgin birth.

Prof. R Transcript

pp. 7-9

COMMITTEE: In connection with your introductory remarks about the possibility of systematics in the future, what about *sola Scriptura* as formal principle? Do you think these terms that we have used, formal principle and material principle for justification, are still worthwhile? I am maybe going to heap a few questions, and you can kind of pick the wheat out from the chaff if you will. Is the primary question as we approach systematics: What do the Scriptures say, or how does this relate to the Gospel of Christ? Are these two things mutually exclusive? I am thinking of very practical things now confronting our own church as far as the ordination of women is concerned. I have heard, and this is not from anybody on your faculty, but a fellow pastor of mine said, "Well, to me the question is not whether the Scriptures plainly teach for or against the ordination of women, but does this impinge upon salvation?" Now I am asking—I guess to go back to the original thing—how do you see *sola Scriptura*? Is this still a valid thing, formal principle? How does this get practicality in approaching dogmatics?

PROF. R: It certainly is practical. I would take the two questions with which you started and link them together—"What does the Scripture say?" with the question "What does the Gospel say?"—as being inseparable questions. They are not really two questions. But you could make one question out of that and say, What does the Scripture informed by the Gospel say? Then we are off and away. And if in the face of that kind of question you would say, Is the *sola Scriptura* question essential, is it primary, is it practical? I would say yes to all of those. Maybe the other question, where you used the example of the ordination of women and asked, does that impinge on salvation? I think I would be inclined to turn that around and say (because at least offhand I see no immediate way in which that does impinge on salvation), I would turn it around and say, Does salvation impinge on it? Does the Gospel of Christ, as that Gospel is rehearsed in the Scriptures of Old and New Testament, have implications for such things as the ordination of women? I would say it does.

COMMITTEE: So many of these things, though, have a quite indirect relationship to the whether I maintain faith in, whether you are talking about capital punishment or civil obedience or a host of other things, if you qualify your statement on *sola Scriptura*, I don't recall just exactly what you said in the Gospel, the Scriptures, in the light of the Gospel or whatever, aren't you in danger of changing the formal or the material principle, changing them around?

PROF. R: I don't know where that distinction between formal and material principles originated.

COMMITTEE: That was my original question. Do you still think this is a valid—?

PROF. R: I am not so sure I do. First of all, I don't think the terms mean much to people today: this old Aristotelian distinction between form and matter. If we could be sure that the people with whom we are using such terms did understand the (let's say) Aristotelian roots of those terms, then I would feel a lot more at ease using them, because one of the first things that any good Aristotelian would have said is that you can never have form without matter or matter without form. Now as long as we could be sure that all of the parties to the discussion would understand that—that in other words you can't have Scripture (if that is the *forma*) for Christian theological purposes, you can't use Scripture without letting it be informed by the *matéria*, which in this case is, say, the doctrine of justification by faith alone—O.K., then I would grant the validity of that kind of language. Off hand I don't know of any better language.

That raises the question, Is the distinction still important: to distinguish between the Scriptures and the Gospel, which gives them their life? I don't know: in the history of theological distinctions are always made for some purpose. And

I would have to answer that question, Is the distinction still a worthwhile distinction? by cross-examining and counter-asking, What is the purpose you have in mind for making the distinction? Then I could say maybe, maybe, the distinction is valid. My own reading of the situation is that right now what we need like we need a hole in the head is to distinguish the Scripture from the Gospel. Rather what we need right now is to see a kind of symbiosis between them. You can't talk sensibly about Scripture without talking about the Gospel. And you can't talk sensibly about the Gospel without talking about that Gospel which is the Gospel of the Holy Scriptures.

COMMITTEE: The reason for the question that you hinted at, I said I want to know what the reason would be, would be, whether it would be possible then to enjoy within the church a diversity on a host of different things that perhaps Scriptures talk plainly but which would not by means destroy faith in the Gospel. I mentioned several examples. What would be the reason for—would this mean, if we don't want to distinguish Scripture from the Gospel, that we could permit a diversity doctrinally limited only by the Gospel in the sense of the way of salvation?

PROF. R: O.K., I think I catch the drift of your question. (If I don't, you will ask it again.) A diversity "doctrinally" already loads the terms in a way in which I wouldn't feel at ease with them. The only "doctrine" that I find the Lutheran Confessions operating with is the *doctrina evangelii*, the doctrine of the Gospel. And about that doctrine there is no diversity. That is one reason I said before, I don't see the Book of Concord, for example, as being a denominational document. It is meant to confess, starting with the Catholic Creeds all the way through to the Solid Declaration, it is intended to confess the doctrine of the Gospel, not a Lutheran doctrine of the Gospel. We would all say, Obviously not that. Not even a Lutheran perspective on the doctrine of the Gospel. It means to be confessing one faith, the only faith there ever was. The same one faith, one Lord, one Baptism, one God and Father of all. That is what the apostolic churches confess. So I don't feel at home with the language of "doctrinal diversity," I suppose. But on the other hand—

COMMITTEE: Excuse me, just for clarification let me—you are talking about the Formula of Concord and use the term Gospel. Are you using it in the sense of the Formula, the Gospel as including concept plus all of the supporting doctrine all the way from creation through eschatology encircling, supporting—

PROF. R: Yes, the latter, the broad sense, that is right, for which the typical terminology of the confessors is to refer to these as "articles." These are articulations, specific articulations of one dimension or one sector rather than another of that single Gospel.

Prof. O Transcript

pp. 11-12

COMMITTEE: Can we say that Jesus did the miracles attributed to Him in the Gospels in a sense that He interrupted the usual natural processes?

PROF. O: Yes.

COMMITTEE: Did Christ walk on water?

PROF. O: I would see no reason to say He didn't.

COMMITTEE: You would say that He did then?

PROF. O: Yes.

COMMITTEE: Is it acceptable for a Lutheran theologian to deny this?

PROF. O: I would say, now you're asking exegetical questions. Now personally I'm in the clear, I am not as certain as if a Lutheran theologian, going to the Greek text of the Bible and reading there that if this is the case, that Jesus was walking *παρά τὴν θάλασσαν* and he would understand that to mean "alongside," if he did not do this because he denied the possibility, but he was really convinced that the text said something else, then I would have to allow him that possibility. He's not denying the miraculous.

COMMITTEE: Now, are you saying that the text in this instance is not clear, that there's a question as to what is meant?

PROF. O: I said, I'll say it very clearly. If another interpreter were convinced that the text bore that meaning, then I would allow him the right as an exegete to say that's what the text in his opinion meant, provided he is not saying it because he starts with the assumption that Jesus cannot do miracles. Am I making myself clear?

COMMITTEE: All right, Dr. X, but then I want to pursue this —

COMMITTEE: Yes, I want to too, in this sense: What would determine whether you would permit him this? In other words, are you saying that his stance on the miraculous or the text?

PROF. O: Both. In other words, if I thought, one, that he is saying this because he says, I have a supposition that this is impossible, Jesus could not have done it, therefore the text could not mean that — that I would rule out. If he asserts that, yes, it is possible that Jesus could have done it, but as I read this Greek text, I don't think the Greek text says that. Do I make myself clear?

COMMITTEE: But how would you determine — you see, this is a very clear statement as far as I know, there is no — the exegesis seems rather straightforward. Or if you don't want to take this one, take the raising of Lazarus.

PROF. O: I see no difficulty with the raising of Lazarus.

COMMITTEE: Now suppose I were to tell you, though, that I would come along with some approach to the text in which I would say that I am convinced that this is a text clearly says this, I don't think there's any possibility with the text of changing it to say that it meant something else. The words are clear. But suppose I say that I believe these words are a legend that was placed in there by either the writer or a redactor later to build up the concept of Christ as the Messiah and on that basis I would not accept the account of the raising of Lazarus. Would you permit me this?

PROF. O: I would say, "You're wrong." I don't know if it's a question of permitting.

COMMITTEE: Would you say that I can say this as a Lutheran theologian?

PROF. O: I would say that you should not.

COMMITTEE: But you would still allow me the possibility of saying —

PROF. O: You are using the words, "can," understand to be, "is it," "can he say." Obviously he can say it. He does.

COMMITTEE: Yes. What I mean, and I'm glad you came back with this because we want to understand each other very clearly. What I'm saying is, Can I legitimately say this as one who is pledged to accept the Word as *norma normans*? In other words, can I take a case where there is a very clear statement, where there is no exegetical problem (yes) but where I may on the basis of some source theory or redaction theory, perhaps draw the conclusion that this is something which is added by the community later, that this was not in fact something which happened, it is a legend, it is added. Now, suppose I take the position, can I legitimately do this as a person who said I am pledged to the Scriptures and to the *sola Scriptura*?

PROF. O: I guess I would ask, "What does this do to the Gospel?" to this man. What does it do to the proclamation of the Good News. Does it undercut the *extra nos* character of my salvation? Have you made it impossible to proclaim that Jesus Christ is the Lord, by His life, death and resurrection? And if he has, obviously, impossible to say that as a good Lutheran theologian.

Faculty Statement to Graduates Pentecost 1972

A Parting Peace, Section II

May the Holy Spirit,
Whom the Father sends in Jesus' name,
Bring these words to your remembrance:

"HE WHO LOVES ME WILL BE LOVED
BY MY FATHER." (John 14:21)

How like a father. No one pleases a father quite so much as someone who loves his boy. You fathers among the graduates know from experience how pleasant it is when people admire your offspring. For us faculty too it is gratifying how congregations, districts and the Synod welcome you, our "sons." Now God our Father declares, "You are pleased with my Son, and so I am pleased with you." Why is He pleased? "Why does the Father love you?" asks Luther, and answers, "Not because you . . . are beyond reproach in the righteousness of the Law." (WA XL 1, 371). It is not because we do well or formulate teachings correctly, and not because of deeds performed or doctrines accepted. On that we are all agreed. We are furthermore agreed — all of us in the Synod — that we are the children of God because of His Son. Look what we have in common: nothing less than a gracious Father who loves us and all who love Jesus His Son.

But then could a Synod like ours, bravely confessing the Lutheran Symbols, still be infected with works righteousness? Sad to say, the lust to be right in and of ourselves is a temptation with which each of us must wrestle. Surely no one of us teaches that a man can be saved by his good works or the correct wording of his doctrine. But a form of this false teaching crouches, ready to spring upon the most devout among us. Take for example the sentence, "Believe the Bible simply because God spoke it, and you will be right." What could possibly be wrong with such a formulation? It sounds so good. And yet, is there not a danger here? Might not this position reduce the whole of Scripture to a law to be obeyed, as though the Scriptures were only a set of orders issued by an Authority who outranks us supremely. Of course the Holy Scriptures are God's authoritative Word. But say we would bow to them in unthinking obedience, responding to all their statements in the same way, with the same unswerving submission. What could possibly be wrong with that? What would we have missed? The most distinctive thing of all: the biblical Gospel, the Good News of the Father who loves us supremely. That is the distinctive "authority," says Paul, "given by the Lord to build you up, not pull you down." (2 Cor. 10:8). It is "such authority to men" as we have from God in Christ Jesus who is distinguished by His "authority on earth to forgive sins." (Matt. 9:6,8). If we were to obscure that distinctive biblical Word then we would not only have blunted the Law's terrible accusation, but we would also have blurred the unexpected and undeserved miracle of the Good News of our redemption. We would have failed to distinguish between the words God speaks to us, failed to give the varied response God seeks from His varied words to us. We would have failed to hear the Gospel as distinct from the Law.

Listen to the Gospel again. Why does the Father love us, wrong and wicked though we are? Luther answers: Because this Son, "sent from the Father into the world, is pleasing to you," therefore, "the Father loves you and you are pleasing to Him." (WA XL 1, 371). Rightness with God is the free gift of the Father bestowed on sinners because of the Son. It is the Son who reconciles us to the Father and the Father to us (AC III 3; *Apol.*, IV, 269).

5d. The Findings Concerning The Gospel

The previous section indicated the faculty's tendency to limit the authority of Scripture to the "Gospel." The term "Gospel" is used in various ways by the faculty, some of which may cause confusion. All members of the faculty define Gospel as the Good News of the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ and sometimes use it in its more comprehensive sense, which includes all the articles of faith. Such usages of the term "Gospel" are completely in harmony with our confessional practice.

However, it should be noted that some members of the faculty have a tendency to use the term "Gospel" in such a way that the effects of the Gospel are fused with the Gospel itself. For example, it is claimed that the Gospel is not the Gospel unless it is specifically addressed to certain social, cultural, economic, and political situations. Similarly, some evidently place the church's attempts to deal with social concerns on an equal priority basis with the preaching of the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. Because of the serious implications of confusion in the understanding of the Gospel, it is important that we understand our confessional position in this matter.

On May 25, 1972, the seminary faculty adopted a 10-page farewell message to the graduating class. It was mailed out with the summer 1972 issue of the *St. Louis Seminary Newsletter*. It bears the title "A Parting Peace." Sections of it have been referred to earlier in this report where it seemed useful in amplifying the findings of the Fact Finding Committee report. Section I deals with the forgiveness of sins. Section VII deals with the peace of the Gospel. At several places the first section speaks of the "forgiveness of sins." Section II speaks of the Son reconciling men to the Father and refers to the *Augsburg Confession*, III, 3, and *Apology*, IV, 269, which contain beautiful statements of the Gospel.

In spite of such references, there are some indications in the document that the "Gospel" is being understood in a primarily this-worldly way. The closing section (see the documentation) refers to Christ's promise: "I am going away and coming back to you." The faculty statement interprets this to mean: "Peace is His 'coming back' to you. And this time He brings the Father along. Both of them have come to dwell with us in peace." No one would wish to challenge the truth of that statement. But is this really what Jesus was talking about? Is that all there is? The Confessions in the very spot referred to by the faculty in another section state: "The same Lord Christ will return openly to judge the living and the dead, as stated in the Apostles' Creed" (*Augsburg Confession*, III, 6). In view of this, is the faculty's statement sufficient? Is it unkind to mention that eternal life, heaven, and hell are nowhere mentioned even as often as Christ and the Gospel is referred to? In a very secular age, where many think of the Gospel only with reference to this life on earth, do we not need to proclaim the heavenly dimensions of our salvation? Is not this the full Gospel?

EXCURSUS ON THE WORD "GOSPEL" IN THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

In any discussion concerning the Lutheran confessors' use of the term "Gospel" it must be recognized that it is used with three different meanings in the Lutheran Confessions.

It is used (1) with reference to the New Testament, (2) with reference to the total context of the New Testament, (3) with reference to the promise of forgiveness for Christ's sake.

To the Christians of Luther's day, "Gospel" meant first of all the *New Testament writings* concerning Christ.

Large Catechism (Ten Commandments, 182): "This [fifth] commandment is simple enough. We hear it explained every year in the Gospel, Matthew 5, where Christ himself explains and summarizes it."

The Gospel concept is used in the Confessions in such a broad way that it can be identified with *Scripture as a whole*. Note how Melancthon in *Apology*, XII, 157, mentions "Scripture" and then says "it constantly teaches that we obtain

the forgiveness of sins freely because of Christ. . . ." Then in *Apology*, XV, 5, he says: "The Gospel teaches that by faith, for Christ's sake, we freely receive the forgiveness of sins and are reconciled to God."

Note the twofold meaning of Gospel in the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* (60): "The Gospel requires of those who preside over the churches that they preach the Gospel, remit sins, administer the sacraments, and, in addition, exercise jurisdiction, that is, excommunicate those who are guilty of notorious crimes and absolve those who repent."

Fagerberg states: "The expression 'the chief article of the Gospel,' *praecipuus evangelii locus*, always refers to the doctrine of justification by faith—but what is the Gospel? It signifies either the writings of the New Testament or, what is more probable, the teachings and instructions which these writings contain and which are continually proclaimed in the church. It is certainly in this sense that the word is used in Ap XXI, 35-36, which speaks of preaching and confessing the Gospel." (Holsten Fagerberg, *A New Look at the Lutheran Confessions (1529 to 1537)* [St. Louis: CPH, 1972], p. 92)

The confessors also use the term Gospel in the narrow sense of the promise of the forgiveness of sins. Cf. *Apology*, IV, 260: "The preaching of the Gospel must be added, that is, that the forgiveness of sins is granted to us if we believe that our sins are forgiven for Christ's sake." However, the clearest distinction is made by the *Formula of Concord* (Solid Declaration, V, 3-6): "When we rightly reflect on this controversy, we find that it was chiefly occasioned by the fact that the little word 'Gospel' does not always have one and the same meaning but is used in a twofold way, both in the Holy Scripture of God and by ancient and modern theologians. In the one case the word is used in such a way that we understand by it the entire teachings of Christ, our Lord, which in his public ministry on earth and in the New Testament he ordered to be observed. Here the term includes both the exposition of the law and the proclamation of the mercy and grace of God, his heavenly Father, as it is written in Mark 1:1, 'The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.' Shortly thereafter the chief parts are announced, namely, repentance and forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:4). Similarly when Christ after his resurrection commands his apostles to preach the Gospel in all the world (Mark 16:15), he summarizes his doctrine in a few words, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sin should be preached in his name to all nations' (Luke 24:46, 47). Likewise, Paul calls his entire teaching the 'Gospel' (Acts 20:24) and summarizes it under these heads: repentance to God and faith in Christ. And when the word 'Gospel' is used in its broad sense and apart from the strict distinction of Law and Gospel, it is correct to define the word as the proclamation of both repentance and the forgiveness of sins. For John, Christ, and the apostles began in their preaching with repentance and expounded and urged not only the gracious promise of the forgiveness of sins but also the divine law. In addition, however, the word 'Gospel' is also used in another (that is, in a strict) sense. Here it does not include the proclamation of repentance but solely the preaching of God's grace. So it appears shortly afterward in the first chapter of St. Mark, where Christ said, 'Repent and believe in the Gospel' (Mark 1:15)."

Cf. transcripts and exhibits that follow for statements on this topic. Cf. also Appendix IV: *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, Section I. Christ as Savior and Lord, and II. Law and Gospel.

Documentation

Prof. S Transcript

pp. 10-11

COMMITTEE: You are convinced, Prof. S, then, that your faculty does impress upon the students the need for verbalizing the Gospel and that the social action is the result of that Gospel in the person's life.

PROF. S: Yes. The two together should be really called the Gospel also in a certain sense.

COMMITTEE: This is one of the things that we are concerned about in the field, which you can appreciate that the young men who come to us, I do not have one like that, I have one who knows how to lay the foundations, for every fine social action. He had taken involvement in a prison, hunger marches, getting involved with the poverty problem. The whole range of it and to have a young man, he graduated in 1966, which is quite recent, my associate, and you have been able to steer around that cliff where they equate social action with the Gospel—

PROF. S: No, I have no qualms about that in the least, that anybody believes that, going off the deep end in that way, as far as the faculty is concerned.

COMMITTEE: Am I correct in understanding you that you indicate that the response to the Gospel, which are the fruits of faith, that they are to be identified as being a part of the Gospel itself?

PROF. S: In a broader sense of the term. Now obviously when we talk about good news, the kerygma, you have to talk about this good news from God comes to us. But it is also a phase of the Gospel; the life of the Christian is also a part of the fruit; you can't separate the fruit from the tree. Obviously you can't have fruit without a tree, but a tree that has no fruit is no good either. It is a total picture.

Prof. XX

Essay: "The Meaning of Gospel"

Eastern Missouri Pastoral Conference, Oct. 15-17, 1968

In our day, this age-old tension between the idea that Christianity is primarily the bestowal of divine stability and permanence and the view which sees Christianity as God's involvement in the fact of man's historicity (that is, the problem of change with all this implies) takes the form of

a debate. The issue was stated succinctly at the National Council of Churches 1967 meeting and at the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin. "Is the Gospel aimed at the conversion of individuals or at the problems of political, social, economic and cultural life?" Sparked in part by Harvey Cox and Colin Williams, some Christians are affirming that the Gospel takes on meaning only as it presents a challenge to social structures (*Ecumenical Review*, XX, [1968], 114).

As one reads the history of Christian thought, one becomes aware how these two emphases, the individual and the corporate character of the Gospel, have always struggled with each other for dominance. We happen to belong to a theological culture which has deemphasized the social aspects of Gospel. We have difficulty appreciating the other tradition, and those who stress the social concerns of Gospel have difficulties respecting our emphases: However, the moment one says, "the Gospel has a social character," one can read the life of Jesus Christ and see it reflecting social concern at every turn. He is in almost constant conflict with the power structures of His day, for the Pharisees represented both religious and political action on the part of the Christian.

Gospel has a dialogical character and it manifests this in relationship to social, cultural, economic and political situations. Gospel does something more than create agencies and institutions of social welfare. It calls the Christian to be an informed critic of every aspect of life, and it calls him to participate in these areas, always seeking to call the orders and structures of life to conform more fully to the virtues which our Lord said belonged to those who walked according to the Spirit in the Kingdom of God.

It appears that one challenge to pastors today is to keep the individualistic and social character of the Gospel in creative tension. We can go so far as to say that Gospel is not truly and fully Gospel unless this is done. Each generation apparently has to take this assignment on anew, for history suggests that one or the other emphasis always fights its way through to dominance the life of the Church.

The splendor and the resiliency of Jesus Christ, our Gospel, is brilliantly reflected in the various definitions and emphases which have marked the church's understanding of its central possession through the ages. Each age not only claims its solemn task but once; it also develops an understanding which communicates the salvation of Jesus Christ most effectively to its contemporaries. Our age is marked most noticeably by a guilty conscience about its social transgressions and by a determination to do something about injustice. It is, in the second place, characterized by an increasing conviction that there has to be something better than that which most people now know. Black riots, student riots, and the continuing spread of communism are adequate evidence of this latter need. Man needs the presence, the gracious presence of God, more than ever before. To these needs, the Gospel is again the answer and its definition and shape must correspond to the language, the fears, the dreams and the needs of Man the Contemporary.

Prof. XX

"The Gospel and the Theological Task"

CTM Special Issue, June-July-Aug. 1969, pp. 438-40

Beginning the Theological Task

So then, theology is for the gospel. In fact it is an articulation of the gospel in a relevant, self-consistent system. How does one go about creating or composing a theology?

Some theological system-makers begin with the gospel. They choose a major biblical thematic expression of the gospel, such as justification, love, life, kingdom of God, and then develop the theme into an overall system by spelling out its implications for the traditional areas of Christian teaching in terms that are designed to be relevant and meaningful.

Because the Lutheran Symbols call justification by grace the chief article of Christian doctrine and because many Lutherans have come to label it "the article by which the church stands or falls," some people have assumed that for Lutherans justification must be the organizing principle of theology — the hubs from which all specific teachings radiate. Such theology was indeed valid at the time of the Reformation. But does it provide the most effective and relevant means for proclaiming the gospel today? Certainly we cannot simply transfer Reformation theology from the 16th to the 20th century without accommodating it or applying it

to 20th-century conditions. But must we begin with justification at all? In fact, do we begin the theological task with some basic thematic expression of the gospel?

No! Not if we want to assure a relevant proclamation of the gospel! For theology to be relevant, the theological task has to begin not with the gospel but with the situation to which it is to be addressed. The first step in theology formulation is to analyze the conditions of the world for whose sake the gospel is to be proclaimed. "The world writes the agenda," we are being told these days. True as that may be in other areas, it is true also for theology. The situation in our world should help shape our theology.

Why? Because there is no "gospel in a vacuum." The gospel cannot be dealt with by itself apart from the situation to which it is addressed. It is ever so much more than a set of religious propositions, spiritual truths, or divine principles. If it were only that, it could be passed on unchanged from generation to generation. The gospel must always be addressed to particular conditions and circumstances. Therefore, it cannot be formulated in terms enduringly valid for every age and condition. Each formulation of the gospel is conditioned by the situation to which it is addressed. What the situation is determines how the gospel is said.

The gospel is not gospel unless it is addressed to a situation or condition. Good news! That's what the gospel is. The term has many implications. It implies that communication is intended, that there is something to say, that the situation of those to be addressed is "bad news," and that what there is to say will be good news to those who hear it. If the gospel is indeed to be good news, it must be addressed to a particular situation and the theological task must begin with an analysis of the situation of those to whom the gospel is to be spoken.

Some features of the human situation are so basic that they are common to every period of history. Man is man, no matter what the age in which he lives. Many of his needs remain unchanged. He looks for life in place of death. He longs for fellowship in the midst of lonely isolation. He cannot figure out how to insure consistent justice and prevent exploitation. Because the human condition is so much the same from age to age, theology today will be similar to the theologies of other eras in many of its basic emphases.

Yet each age has its own characteristics and its distinct condition. Our age does not share the same concerns as the 2d, 12th, 16th, or 19th centuries — not even those of the early 20th century. For Luther's time a chief problem was to find a *merciful* God; in our age people ask whether there is a God. The situation in our day is enormously different from preceding periods of history. And so it is not possible merely to reproduce a theology of the past. It does not speak the gospel to our situation.

Therefore the first requirement in the theological task is to analyze the condition of our present age to determine what the situation is to which the gospel is addressed. What is our condition? Secularism is a dominant characteristic; we have learned to do quite well without God. The outlook is materialistic; we hunger for things and never fill up. We are for the first time inextricably bound together as one world, living under the shadow of "The Bomb" in an environment in which any war flirts with global suicide. World hunger and poverty are serious problems, confronting the world with catastrophe. Our life together is torn apart by serious racial antagonisms. Technology is undercutting our basic human values. My list is far from exhaustive, but it contains enough to show how special the condition of our age is.

When the analysis is done, the theological task can move on to formulate the gospel in terms that will speak relevantly and meaningfully to our present situation. In fact the analysis itself will help to elicit meaningful articulations of the gospel.

That is not to say that the content of the gospel issues from the world's needs. The basic content of the gospel issues from God's revelation and His saving action in Israel and in Jesus Christ. But the world's needs should determine the form and shape in which the gospel is expressed. The human situation should be a major determining factor in theology. That's because theology is for the gospel and because the gospel is good news.

Gospel and Scripture

If the human situation determines the shape of theology, where does theology get its content? It gets its content from

the Scriptures. For Lutherans the Scriptures are "rule and norm" of faith. They are our source for the gospel as originally proclaimed.

The Scriptures are the written witnesses to God's self-revelation and to His saving action in history presented by those who shared in the experience by faith. The Old Testament writings proclaim the gospel by witnessing to God's relation to the Israelite nation. The New Testament writings proclaim the gospel by witnessing to God's saving action in Jesus Christ.

The gospel enunciated in the Scriptures is rooted in certain events, and its proclamation is based on them: an exodus, the establishment of a kingdom, an exile and a return, a man's birth, his death and resurrection, a Pentecost experience. But the gospel as proclaimed in the Scriptures not only reported the events; it affirmed that they were revelatory and saving acts of God. (In Exodus God brings the Israelites out of Egypt; in Luke Mary's son is the Son of God.) In addition, the gospel proclamation in the Scriptures specified the significance of God's actions for the situation and condition of the people to which the proclamation was addressed. (Jesus Christ "was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification." [Rom. 4:25])

Prof. AA Transcript

pp. 9-10

COMMITTEE: Speaking before about the misapplication of the two kingdoms to see the role of the church only in preaching the Gospel, and somebody else is going to have to feed them and clothe them, now granted that we want the fullness of the mission of the church in both areas, do you think it's correct on the basis of the New Testament and Jesus' commission and so forth, and words in Matthew 16: What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? to say that the primary task of the church is to save souls? Can we lift one side without neglecting either side? Can we lift the one above the other, New Testamentally?

PROF. AA: At the risk of being misunderstood, I would say no. Now just let me clarify. The two kingdoms, for instance, does not in my understanding suggest that the church has the ministry to feed or to—and to clothe; in fact it sees that God feeds and clothes all kinds of people by many means other than the church as an institution ministering, so that, you know, that's one point. I just want to make sure it's clear. Now whether or not, I think to me, that is not help the advance of the Gospel when the typical sermon, and I've preached on it some times past and I hope not too recently, but where I have said, God wills that the poor be clothed and the poor be fed and the sick healed and such, but more and above everything else God wills that the Gospel be preached. I'm not sure, I have not in the studies I have, I think that what we try to do, I know that pastors are trying to do what I was trying to do, but I think in that I also cheapened the Gospel, and I think the genius will of the Spirit's coming to us in the word is to see that it's one God, who really, truly in mercy redeems me and you, and in that whole experience, not chronologically, even, but that He's a God who really is seeking in this time, indeed, penultimately, but that's the word where He's living in us now, right now, where we're living in Him, that He seeks—seeks justice, mercy, for all men, and I think homiletically we've got to work at this, of not putting down, you know, I'm not sympathetic with any guy who says, O.K., now we've got to correct a bad practice in the past, we've got to elevate social justice beyond the Gospel. That's just as bad and improper.

COMMITTEE: I'm thinking especially of that Matthew 16 passage. How would you relate that in putting these two things together?

PROF. AA: Well, I guess it's only that passage along with others that would have to be looked at in some kind of balance. Indeed, seeking the kingdom of God, this passage in—

COMMITTEE: Well, that's Matthew 6, but the other one was yes, either one.

PROF. AA: The kingdom, if you seek the kingdom of God that is an awareness in Christ and all that means that the God who you know there is then also the God who is vitally involved in everything.

Prof. I Transcript

pp. 4-5

COMMITTEE: You referred several times in your discussion with X to the doctrine of the Gospel. Are you using Gospel in the wide or narrow sense?

PROF. I: In the sense in which it is used in the Confessions. In the broad sense, actually I use it directly out of the Augsburg Confession, where they say this is our doctrine of the Gospel, here it is, we are telling it to you right now, and then come 21 chief articles of the faith, which is the presentation of the doctrine of the Gospel.

COMMITTEE: So you are using it in the broad sense?

PROF. I: Right.

COMMITTEE: Including more than justification by faith in Christ.

PROF. I: Yes.

COMMITTEE: Before that, 21, help me out there, I have forgotten the number.

PROF. I: 28.

COMMITTEE: What about these others?

PROF. I: The others are specifically called something different. They are—the first 21 are entitled articles of faith and doctrine, and the next seven are called articles about matters in dispute in which an account is given of the abuses which have been corrected. They are really dealing more with practical matters here.

COMMITTEE: So you could say indirectly too they are part of it but not expressly?

PROF. I: Right.

Prof. Z Transcript

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COMMITTEE: What does it mean to you to interpret Scriptures in the light of the Gospel?

PROF. Z: What it means to me to interpret Scripture in the light of the Gospel in my educational work with the students is to use the Law-Gospel model, that you must help the person become aware that he is in an existence of death and fear and anxiety and that then, after you have helped him to see what his own situation is, then you begin to work with him in terms of the Gospel so that he may appropriate the Good News to his own situation, and then let there come from him the response of faith, whether it be thanksgiving or help to the brother or whatever it might be. So my hermeneutical principle in terms at least of my educational courses with the students has always been kind of the do-Law-Gospel approach. From experience through reflection on the Scripture back again to experience. That is sort of the way we go.

COMMITTEE: Would you restrict it to that, or what would you add as additional principles that would guide you?

PROF. Z: Well, I think for educational purposes that would be the primary one because I am trying to move a person to recognize his need.

Prof. R Transcript

p. 9

COMMITTEE: The reason for the question that you hinted at, I said I want to know what the reason would be, would be, whether it would be possible then to enjoy within the church a diversity on a host of different things that perhaps Scriptures talk plainly but which would not by means destroy faith in the Gospel. I mentioned several examples. What would be the reason for—would this mean, if we don't want to distinguish Scripture from the Gospel, that we could permit a diversity doctrinally limited only by the Gospel in the sense of the way of salvation?

PROF. R: O.K. I think I catch the drift of your question. (If I don't, you will ask it again.) A diversity "doctrinally" already loads the terms in a way in which I wouldn't feel at ease with them. The only "doctrine" that I find the Lutheran Confessions operating with is the *doctrina evangelii*, the doctrine of the Gospel. And about that doctrine there is no diversity. That is one reason I said before, I don't see the Book of Concord, for example, as being a denominational document. It is meant to confess, starting with the

Catholic Creeds all the way through to the Solid Declaration, it is intended to confess the doctrine of the Gospel, not a Lutheran doctrine of the Gospel. We would all say, Obviously not that. Not even a Lutheran perspective on the doctrine of the Gospel. It means to be confessing one faith, the only faith there ever was. The same one faith, one Lord, one Baptism, one God and Father of all. That is what the apostolic churches confess. So I don't feel at home with the language of "doctrinal diversity," I suppose. But on the other hand —

COMMITTEE: Excuse me, just for clarification let me—you are talking about the Formula of Concord and use the term Gospel. Are you using it in the sense of the Formula, the Gospel as including concept plus all of the supporting doctrine all the way from creation through eschatology, encircling, supporting —

PROF. R: Yes, the latter, the broad sense, that is right, for which the typical terminology of the confessors is to refer to these as "articles." These are articulations, specific articulations of one dimension or one sector rather than another of that single Gospel.

Faculty Statement to Graduates

Pentecost 1972

A Parting Peace

To the Graduates:

You are leaving us and yet you are joining us. We rejoice that you will now be sharing in the ministry of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ with us and more than 6,000 other pastors of our Synod. Our parting word is, therefore, a word of welcome. We welcome you as our partners in a common mission.

Our parting word, our word of welcome, is a word of peace. Not just any peace! It is what our Lord called "my own peace," the hard-won peace of the cross. That peace unites us with God and with one another. It is our common bond and must always have top priority in our teaching and in our life.

The following seven reminders—about repentance, about Sonship, about inspiration, about historical facts, about prophecy, about mission, about peace—are suggested by the Holy Gospel and Epistle for the Feast of Pentecost. With these reminders we bear witness to our faith and proclaim to you again the blessed Gospel which unites us in Christ's own peace.

His peace we leave with you,
The Faculty.

I

May the Holy Spirit,
Whom the Father sends in Jesus' name,
Bring these words to your remembrance:

"REPENT, . . . FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF YOUR SINS."
(Acts 2:38)

To repent, men need to be more than merely sinners. They need also to be believers. They need the divine Law, yes, and the Law in the fullness of its criticism. How else could they be contrite? But to be truly contrite, to be free enough to take the criticism of the Law, sinners need more. They need the Gospel. "For human nature cannot bear [the divine wrath] unless it is sustained by the Word of God," that is, the Gospel. (*Apology* XII, 32). So the call to repentance is not only judgment. It is also the promise of help. "What are we to do?" cried the audience at Pentecost, pleading for help. Peter's answer, "Repent," was the help they could trust. Faced with our current synodical problems, you and we and the people of our Synod ask the same question: "What are we to do?" The answer at Pentecost is still our trustworthy help. "Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus the Messiah for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

We all resist repentance like the plague, preferring not to notice who it is who calls us to repent: the Lord Himself. Instead we play the judge ourselves and shift the blame to others. Some blame everything on our synodical or theological leadership, while others blame those who blame that

leadership. Both attitudes are, at best, half right. Both evade their own obligation, and their own opportunity, to repent. So do those who consider our current problems trivial or call themselves neutral and loftily declare, "A plague on both your houses."

To say "Repent" is no evasion of the hard social and political realities. God uses precisely the realities of history to summon us to repent. And we make bold therefore to call you and all in the Synod—ourselves included—to hear God's call: "Repent." Let us repent, we ourselves first of all, and receive from God the power to walk together in His paths again.

If we find it difficult to repent, that difficulty has been mounting for a long time. It has long roots in our common synodical past. For what penitent sinners need most is faith, faith in God's promised mercy. Only by faith can they accept His judgment without being destroyed by it. "For faith makes the difference between the contrition of Peter and that of Judas." (*Apol.*, XII, 8). Only by faith can sinners profit from God's judgment, and even run with it. "Filial fear can be clearly defined as an anxiety joined with faith, . . . whereas in servile fear faith does not sustain the anxious heart." (*Apol.*, XII, 38). But have we in our Synod, any of us, always remembered that that is what faith is for: "for the forgiveness of your sins," as Peter promised, so that "you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"? Haven't we instead, far too often, prized our faith for its own correctness, rather than for its hold on that Father who forgives our incorrectness? Or perhaps out of scorn for just such a position, or out of a desire to accommodate our faith to a skeptical culture, have we minimized the reality of the miraculous, forgetting that all the miracles point to that one miracle, "the forgiveness of your sins"? In short have we Missouri Synod Lutherans so discouraged faith that we lack the boldness and confidence, the sheer audacious courage to repent?

Yet faith is still among us. That we know, for the Word is still among us, both Law and Promise, written and preached and sacramental. We are all of us baptized—"baptized," as Peter reminds us, "for the forgiveness of your sins." And isn't our Baptism itself a sign for our repentance, signifying "that the old Adam in us, . . . should be drowned by daily sorrow and repentance and be put to death, and that the new man should come forth daily and rise up . . ."? (*Small Catechism*, Baptism, 12). Isn't that sign enough of God's persistent mercy? And where God shows mercy, there is faith; and where faith, repentance; and where repentance, "the forgiveness of sins" and "the gift of the Holy Spirit." We heartily desire these gifts by which God will transform our very conflict into an opportunity for new beginnings. We acknowledge our own need for repentance and pray the Father for the strong faith that will enable us to repent.

Faculty Statement to Graduates

Pentecost 1972

A Parting Peace, Section VII

May the Holy Spirit,
Whom the Father sends in Jesus' name,
Bring these words to your remembrance.

"PEACE IS MY PARTING GIFT TO YOU." (John 14:27)

As we your teachers and now your colleagues bid you farewell, we wish you the Lord's peace. What kind of peace? "My own peace," Jesus calls it, "such as the world cannot give." This peace is His because He gives it, but more than that, He achieved it. "Peace" is that great prize for which He did battle with the world and which He now bestows upon His people. We welcome you as fellow theologians to the lifelong task of interpreting His peace and of distinguishing it from the world's peace. We your colleagues in the ministry of the Gospel of peace appeal to you and to all our brothers in our Synod to remember that we are called of God to struggle not against each other but against the world for the sake of the world. Does any one of us really need to be reminded that the world is present also even in our own hearts and lives? We have the world in common, and better than that. We—you and we and all God's people—have the Lord's own peace established and strong in our hearts.

His peace has the shape of the cross. The Father did not bestow it as a direct celestial infusion straight out of heaven into all believers. He gave it in and through the Word made flesh, in Jesus born of a Jewish mother, in Jesus crucified on Golgotha, in Jesus opposed by the powers of darkness who could not overcome Him, in Jesus whom God raised on the third day. Through these great acts the peace of God was won, the unworldly peace the world needed. Note that this peace is "unworldly" not "other-worldly." It is not an escape from the world any more than His gaining of that peace was a flight from the world and its evil powers. And now He gives us that peace as we struggle where the world is most worldly, and where the Gospel is under attack. He gives it to us who, as He himself was, are burdened with specific historical and worldly burdens. There will be days when you are tempted to complain "Why can't we be your people and enjoy your peace without all these extras, all these historical burdens? It is heavy enough, Lord, being a Christian, but why Missouri Synod Lutheran? Why must I be caught in this controversy about the priority of the Gospel?" It may even seem like mockery to hear someone greet you and say, "The peace of the Lord be with you."

Yet that is precisely the word that we who are besieged by the world need to hear. He has won the peace and bestows it freely on His own. While His Gospel is under attack we need to speak that message of peace to the attackers and to ourselves. With the enemy at the gates he

says, "Set your troubled hearts at rest and banish your fears." Easier said than done? But it has been done! How? By His "going away." For His going away was not only to death but to a victorious reunion with the Father. And more than that, He promises "I am going away and coming back to you." Peace is His "coming back" to you! And this time He brings the Father along. Both of them have come to dwell with us in peace.

Being His people, being the place of His dwelling the being identified with His Gospel will inevitably mean conflict with the world. But it will also mean a rich measure of His peace. That is His promise. Being Lutherans in the current debate over the nature and function of the Gospel makes that conflict even sharper. But as theologians in that struggle we wish you His peace and more. We pray that a double measure of His Spirit may be yours so that you may discern ever more clearly how all questions of life and faith in our church and our ministry must be posed anew and reconsidered in the light of the priority of the Gospel. In that work we are one, for the Gospel has made us one. The Gospel is our agenda!

As we undertake this mission we bear our burdens and we bear with our brothers, remembering that our brothers also bear with us, and that Christ bears us all. Thus it is that as we bid you farewell we offer you this parting peace, which is His peace. And we speak that word with you as we have spoken it with each other at every campus communion, "Peace, Brothers!"

5e. The Findings Concerning The Historical-Critical Method

The Fact Finding Committee explored the use of the historical-critical method at the St. Louis Seminary. It occupies a large portion of the interviews because of its use in the interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures, as well as the controversy it has precipitated in the Synod. Because it is a matter essentially unfamiliar to many of the readers of this report, the findings are prefaced by a general statement about the method and its presuppositions.

After the general statement there follow a number of sections dealing with theological topics affected by the use of the method. A study of these sections provides a rather comprehensive view of how the majority of the St. Louis Seminary professors view and use the method.

5e, 1. A General Statement — The Historical-Critical Method

The historical-critical method received a major portion of the attention of the Fact Finding Committee. It is the principal method of interpretation of the Holy Scriptures in use at the Seminary. All but a minority of professors indicate approval of the method. The president of the Seminary has indicated publicly that it is not possible for a seminary professor to teach courses in Biblical interpretation at the seminary level without using historical-critical methodology.*

Because the Holy Scriptures are to serve as the only fountainhead and source of doctrine in the Lutheran Church, proper Biblical interpretation is crucial to the entire theological task. On that account, it is essential to understand how the historical-critical method is used at Concordia Seminary.

Considerable confusion exists as to what the historical-critical method really is. Many in the church tend to confuse it with the *historical-grammatical* method, which has long been in common use in the Christian church. Indeed, advocates of the historical-critical method commonly expound the historical-grammatical method when they speak to pastoral conferences and lay audiences on the topic of historical-critical method.

* March 6, 1972, "Statement to the Seminary Community."

The *historical-grammatical* method seeks to expound the full meaning of Scripture on the basis of a careful examination of the text of Scripture. The historical setting, the context of the surrounding passages of Scripture, the meaning of the words used, the nuances of grammatical structure and literary type, the overall teachings of Scripture on the topic in question, and particularly the fact that the two principal doctrines of Scripture are Law and Gospel — all this must be carefully investigated by the Biblical interpreter. And all this is in harmony with the approach to Scripture used by confessional Lutherans from the days of the Reformation down to our day. It is the method of Biblical interpretation taught at our seminary prior to the introduction of the historical-critical method in recent years.

These factors are also included in the historical-critical method. But a new dimension is added. The words "historical" and "critical" both provide a key to understanding the newer method. The word "criticism" comes from the Greek vocable *κρίνειν*, which means "to discriminate," "to discern," and "to judge." The method judges history. It is based on a philosophy that sacred history is to be judged on the same basis as secular history. Facts are important for their own sake. The quest is to find out what actually happened. Historical principles are applied to the Bible as though it were an ordinary book or set of documents. Historical critics then frequently assert that "what actually happened" and what the Scriptures assert may be very much different.

The method conceives of history as being like nature: *only* what is verifiable by the criteria of *scientific* historical research can be considered to be true. These criteria in turn are determined by the acceptance of the cause-effect chain as being the only structure within which historical verification is possible.

The term "critical" occurs in the combination "historical-critical" because the practitioners of the method hold that by the devices of literary criticism (i. e., form, redaction, and tradition criticism) it is reasonably possible to get behind the wording of the canonical text to some conception of what may have actually happened, for example, in the ministry of Jesus. When that point is reached, an approximation of truth has been achieved.

In principle, such a view of sacred history is tightly bound to a closed naturalistic or positivistic world view. Such a view leaves no room for the living God of the Bible, for the action of God in human affairs, for miracles large or small, including the miracles of the incarnation and the resurrection of our Lord.

Although this view of history underlies the historical-critical method as it is commonly used, it should also be noted that not all users of the historical-critical method, which is based on these assumptions, accept these conclusions as part of their personal theology.

There is no way of verifying a miracle by means of the criteria of scientific historical investigation, because miracles occur as interventions into the cause-effect chain of occurrences. The only certain thing, therefore, that can be observed with respect to miracles is that the primitive church believed them. Or, it is said by practitioners of the historical-critical method, that the pericopes which offer miracles are literary devices to teach truth, quite apart from the question of what actually happened, if anything at all.

Here, for example, is Wilbert F. Howard's comment on the miracle of the raising of Lazarus. It is found on page 649 of volume 8 of *The Interpreter's Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1952): "The difference between revival immediately after death, and resurrection after four days, is so great as to raise doubts about the historicity of this story, especially in view of the unimaginable story in Luke 10:38-42, and the grief of Jesus as He drew near to the tomb has impressed itself upon the imagination of successive generations of readers." Then, what are we to make of this account according to the practitioners of the historical-critical method? Many commentators have considered it to be an allegorical development of the story of the rich man and Lazarus. Here Lazarus is said to rise from the dead, but unbelief on the part of the Jews remains as strong as ever. Others conceive it to be a story (legend) to make the point that Jesus is LIFE not only hereafter but right now. Such interpretations are said to be verifiable, because there are (allegedly) parallels in other literature of the day. (But actual parallels are seldom, if ever adduced, mostly because so little literary evidence has survived, if it ever existed.)

The search for the *Sitz im Leben Jesu* (life situation of Jesus) is intensified by the consideration that as apostles and evangelists interpreted what happened, so the reader of today, the interpreter, living in the church as an "inspired community," is free to offer his own interpretation of what he finds to have been the nature and structure of the original occurrence. For example, Joachim Jeremias (*Parables of Jesus*) lists arguments for his belief that the explanation of the parable of the tares among the wheat comes from Matthew, not from Jesus (p. 85). In fact, he believes that the real point of the parable has been lost in Matthew's interpretation. As Jesus told it, the parable teaches patience for those who are impatient. That's the point of it, and that is not taken up in the explanation. (This parable is in Matt. 13:24-30; the explanation is given in Matt. 13:36-43.) Thus the practitioner of the historical-critical method feels free to recognize Matthew's "mistake" and start over, more correctly, from the way Jesus is thought to have told the parable itself during His ministry.

In the historical-critical method the community (Israel or the primitive church) is thought to have created the theology of the written texts given in canonical Scriptures, thus introducing a sociological notion into theology. In point of fact, a community as such can create nothing apart from the creative individuals within it. According to Lutheran theology, the "creative spirit" who gave us the theology and doctrine offered in the canonical text of Scripture is none other than the Holy Spirit, who inspired His chosen prophets, evangelists, and apostles to bear witness to Jesus Christ. For that reason, our own Synod has warned: "To attribute to the church a creatively formative part in the witness to the event is to fly in the face of all that is revealed concerning the activity of the Spirit; such an attribution introduces an intolerable synergism at a crucial point in the saving work of God." (*Proceedings*, 1969, p. 88, Resolution 2-16)

It is generally recognized that the historical-critical study of the Bible is a product of Protestant liberalism. Its major premises and assumptions reflect a rationalistic attitude that the Bible is to be treated as human literature rather than as the inspired and inerrant Word of God. Even in more recent years, leading practitioners of this method have also been exponents of existentialist theologies which have a tendency to divorce the kerygma, or message of the Gospels, from the historical fabric of the Bible. In the hands of such exegetes, a great deal of uncertainty was introduced into every phase of the Biblical account of salvation, thereby undermining the substance of the Biblical revelation itself.

It is vital for Lutherans to recognize that Christianity is a historical religion grounded in the great acts of God in the Old Testament and culminating in the mighty salvific acts of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. True as it is that God's great message of the Gospel carries its own power (Rom. 1:16), it is a message of something that God actually did in Christ. One cannot say of sacred history that it is a matter of indifference or that it does not matter. Faith is indeed a gift of the Holy Spirit offered and effected through the Gospel. But this acceptance and trust in Christ's redeeming work involves also the knowledge of historical revelation.

In a discussion of all this, one must distinguish between the historical-critical method as such and certain tools it has developed. Some of these tools are useful to the interpreter, provided he does not use them according to the presuppositions of the method itself. For example, form criticism has shown that almost every Gospel pericope (unit) is pretty much self-contained; i. e., all by itself it testifies to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Again; tradition criticism has made us take seriously St. Paul's statement (1 Cor. 15:1-8) that the most important items of the Christian faith came to him by way of "tradition," that is, were passed on to him. Cf. also the words of institution (1 Cor. 11:23). Such remarks not only justify us but encourage us to ask: How did the work of transmitting such things take place?

The issue that the church faces at the Seminary is: Does the hermeneutical method in use — the historical-critical method — do justice to the sacred text to be interpreted? Is the method *as used* the master or the servant of the Holy Scriptures?

The majority of men at the Seminary approve of the historical-critical method. They assert that the negative, destructive aspects have been purged

from the method by their use of "Lutheran presuppositions." They state that they believe the method to be as neutral as a box of tools.*

Presuppositions of the Historical-Critical Method

The controls imposed on the historical-critical method are said to be the Lutheran presuppositions of the Biblical scholar. Although the Fact Finding Committee was not presented with any clear listing, such "Lutheran presuppositions" as the following were expressed:

- A belief that the Holy Spirit would lead into the truth.
- It is prohibitive to cut down the authority of the Gospel.
- Confessional subscription protects us.
- The Scriptures are the Word of God.
- Good scholarship will correct itself.

It might also be observed that some members of the faculty occasionally made reference to the document prepared by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations entitled "A Lutheran Stance toward Contemporary Biblical Studies." However, the controls mentioned in that document were only infrequently alluded to by these professors. Thus, there was little explicit reference to such Lutheran presuppositions as the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of Holy Scripture or the need to avoid interpreting the Bible in such a way that its uniqueness is lost sight of and the canons of secular historians are employed uncritically.

In fact, in the transcripts of the interviews and in essays it becomes quite evident that *in practice* the Seminary professors practice the historical-critical method in the same manner and with virtually all the presuppositions that are inherent in the method itself.

These are assumptions without which the so-called method could never have arisen or developed. Very definitely one such presupposition is that the historical method can stand in judgment over the authenticity and/or truthfulness of Biblical assertions. Thus, for example, it is said that the fall account of Genesis 3 stresses a spiritual truth but not a literal, historical truth. It may also be held that one may quite frankly disagree with an apostle, e. g., on the role of women in the church.

Very definitely another such presupposition, wherever form criticism, redaction criticism, and content criticism are used, is that there are divergent and contradictory theologies in Scripture. "The canon, looked at in the totality of its writings, does not present a unity of content," Käsemann says (*Essays on New Testament Themes* [London: SCM Press, 1960], p. 57). One of the prime purposes of the method is to isolate, trace, and explain these alleged divergent and contradictory theologies in the New Testament. Thus, with one stroke the very possibility of a single, pure doctrine in the church, based on Scripture, is vitiated, and confessionalism, as we have known it throughout the history of our Synod, is rendered an impossibility. And of course, the inerrancy and verbal inspiration of Scripture, as we have understood and confessed these articles of faith in our Synod on the basis of Scripture, are denied.

Now what has happened by the advent of this method of approaching Scripture in our Seminary and Synod? The authority of Scripture has been challenged, nothing less! And this means that Lutheran confessionalism is challenged as well.

Peter Brunner does not speak too strongly when he says: "If the New Testament no longer harmonizes, if in the canonical writings of the New Testament a consensus is no longer heard regarding the Gospel that is to be pro-

* Tools in themselves are neutral. A saw per se is neither good nor bad. A saw can be used for construction or destruction. Everything depends on the purpose for which it is used. But granting this, another factor needs to be remembered. If a man, given a choice of tools, deliberately selects a certain kind of saw to do a job, he has already indicated a prior persuasion purpose about the type of material he is going to be working on. If he deliberately selects a hacksaw, let us say, it is quite obvious that he is of the opinion that he is about to work with metal and not with wood (unless he is woefully unskilled!). The application of this to Biblical studies seems quite clear. A conscious choice of tools reveals the presuppositions with which the student approaches the Bible and begins his work.

A man who genuinely believes that the Bible is God's own immutable Word, inspired by the eternal, omniscient Spirit and therefore free from the relativity that characterizes mere human speculation about God, and men, and history, and things—such a man will hardly select a tool forged intentionally for the study of ordinary human writings for the expressed purpose of separating what is historically conditioned interpretation from what is basic reality, what is fact from what is fiction, what is etiological embellishment from what is a dependable report, what is a multilayered composite of conflicting tradition from what really happened or was spoken.

claimed, then a confessional commitment has become fundamentally impossible" (*Springfielder*, 33,3: Dec. 1969, p. 7). To attempt to avoid the implications of Brunner's statement by a sort of Gospel reductionism is simply impossible. To avoid the issue, as Käsemann does by saying: "The authority of the Bible is the derived authority of the Gospel" (*op. cit.*, p. 57), is the very opposite of the case. For Lutheranism, the Scriptures are our canonical authority for what the Gospel is; that is the meaning of *sola Scriptura* for the Lutheran. Käsemann shows his hand when he immediately proceeds to say: "In itself the Bible has no authority other than that of a venerable and informative historical document" (*ibid.*) — a complete denial of Biblical authority in the Reformation sense of *sola Scriptura*. And just this is the result of the historical-critical method.

For statements from the fact-finding interviews covering the historical-critical method in general see the following transcripts; cf. also Appendix IV, *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, Section IV, "I. Historical Methods of Biblical Interpretation."

Documentation

Prof. H Transcript

p. 5

COMMITTEE: Excuse me, just to clarify a little bit, and then I will give it right back to you. These people you say who head off in the wrong direction for a variety of reasons — can you just list some of those reasons that you think lead them off the wrong rabbit trail, and some of the things you have to watch, some of the caveats you have observed in your own teaching?

PROF. H: Sure. But only in a most general way perhaps, most briefly because I think it is primarily for myself that I will speak rather than attempt to explain anybody else's position. But the paper does mention a couple of things, and they are rather general, but perhaps for that reason I could attempt an answer to it. Leonard Goppelt, for example, who is at the University of Hamburg in Germany, or was at least the last I heard. It speaks that the historical-critical method is used internationally and inter-denominationally. But people continue to come up with different results as they apply the method. Why does that happen? He says it is because they begin with different ecclesiological assumptions and with different theological presuppositions. And that is true. It is not the method in and of itself which leads anybody necessarily anywhere. But the method is a tool in the hands of a man. The method is like a carpenter's toolbox. It is a complex set of tools. And practitioners do a better or worse job, practitioners come up with different results partly because of their difference in skill but partly because of the difference in their set of presuppositions. I use the historical-critical method, but who am I? I am baptized, I am Christian, I am Lutheran, I am committed to the Lutheran Confessions, the ecumenical creeds, the Sacred Scriptures as a Lutheran, and those are ecclesiological and theological presuppositions, and they do make a difference.

Prof. H Transcript

pp. 12-13

COMMITTEE: Could you translate this same thing concerning the resurrection of Christ? I suppose you could say that Bultmann regards that as an exegetical question, and he then gets around to the point where he says that he is convinced that the dead don't come back. He doesn't see any reason for making an exception with Christ. Now would you say that the resurrection of Christ is an exegetical question?

PROF. H: I am not sure that you have correctly given me the gist of Bultmann's exegesis of the resurrection. But it is a fact that there are many matters even regarding the resurrection which are exegetical questions. That Jesus was resurrected on the third day, that the tomb was empty, that He was raised up from the dead by the power of the Father, I cheerfully confess.

COMMITTEE: You confess. Would you allow someone else as a good Lutheran, let's say on Scriptural grounds, to make a different confession? To say that the tomb was not empty? That Christ in fact, that His body still was there or had

been stolen or whatever? That there was no vivification? Is there anything in the method, or let's say method properly applied, that could leave this as an open exegetical question?

PROF. H: To my mind, when people come to negative conclusions about the resurrection of Jesus, they come to those conclusions not because they are applying the historical method, not because they are using historical criticism, but because of their theological, philosophical, ecclesiological presuppositions.

COMMITTEE: The question arose though because, why would you make the distinction between the resurrection narrative and the cursing of a fig tree or the John the Baptist thing? Aren't they all — if one is exegetical, is not that also exegetical?

PROF. H: Every part of the Bible may be studied. Every part of the Bible may be studied according to the historical-critical method. I study primarily the New Testament by means of the historical-critical method. The conclusions to which a person comes are not determined by the use of the historical-critical method. It is very much a set of tools used with more or less skill, used with a variety of presuppositions, and the presuppositions determine far more than the method itself the kinds of conclusions to which people come.

Prof. I Transcript

pp. 4-5

PROF. I: Well, what I said specifically at most of the District conventions — I suppose the wording varied from place to place — I tried to speak as the occasion offered; I said that I felt that probably one of the reasons for the difficulty which the seminary was experiencing in connection with some of the pastors of the Synod was over our use of historical-critical methodology. I think that we, you and I, went to the seminary at a time when there were very negative criticisms that were made by faculty members against what was called higher criticism, and I think that as one of the, particularly the older, pastors of the Synod hear about some of the things that maybe even some of our younger men at the seminary are doing, though it is not limited to them, they may be wondering whether it isn't in fact the intrusion of what they knew to be higher criticism now at the seminary. I wanted the people to understand the truth of the situation. That has been our policy. That has been my policy, and I think that the only way to deal with any situation is to talk about things as they are. And the way things are at the seminary is that the people in our exegetical department — all of them — make use of historical-critical methodology. That, I think, needs to be distinguished from what people understood to be higher criticism. But that is the point. They made use of historical-critical methodology with Lutheran presuppositions, that is, they begin with the basic affirmations about the Scriptures as being the Word of God and the source and norm of faith and of practice and the Scriptures as being authoritative for our doctrine. And they hold Scriptures to be the inspired Word

of God. Then, of course, there are other presuppositions that are included; I didn't try to spell out the whole business for them; I was simply making a generalization about the fact that historical-critical methodology is used and that it is used with basic Lutheran presuppositions.

Prof. I Transcript

pp. 10-11

PROF. I: Well, what I meant by distinction between higher criticism and historical-critical methodology is to try to distinguish between a negative connotation and a neutral connotation. Historical-critical methodology is that: it is a methodology. It is a procedure by which to get at the nature of historical writings. The Bible is a product of history. It is based on events in history. It talks about events in history. It is written by historical human beings. It came about in a way in which writings come about. Therefore you use the methods that we have been able to develop, particularly in recent times, to get at how these writings came to be and at — specifically at what these writings therefore mean. Higher criticism carried with it, for our people particularly, all kinds of negative connotations. And rightly so, because the earlier higher critics, many of them, were not men of faith. They were functioning with presuppositions different from the presuppositions that you have when you are a man of faith. And they brought their presuppositions with them to their task. Presuppositions, for example: miracles don't happen; there never has been a resurrection from the dead, so there can't be one. That is a presupposition. And they brought that kind of thing with them, and it did indeed have an effect on their work; so therefore, if there cannot be a resurrection from the dead, then somehow you must explain the reports of Jesus' resurrection and His appearances, and they have found ways of explaining it. O.K., that is their presupposition. But I think that the task of the Biblical exegete is indeed to use historical-critical methodology — that is one task; he has lots of other tasks, but that is one task — in order to determine what the text is. Those people who have worked — let's take the New Testament for example, let's take the synoptic gospels, just plain synoptic problem — those people who have worked on that question have, I think, ascertained for us this hypothetical "Q," or they have helped us to understand that there are, there were circulating probably — nobody knows for sure, haven't got them — but there were circulating probably collections of stories which reported the miracles of Jesus and stories that reported other acts of Jesus, stories or collections of sayings of Jesus. Now, that is the raw material that was around there in the early church. They were anxious to proclaim the good news about what Jesus had done. They used it in connection with their weekly gatherings, their daily gatherings at worship, and somewhere along the line people like Matthew and Mark and Luke set to the task of putting this stuff down in writing.

Prof. I Transcript

p. 14

COMMITTEE: He is indeed reporting. But suppose someone said he is not, that their study leads them to believe that what is reported concerning Jesus there is something which Jesus couldn't possibly have said or wouldn't have said, that it is building up Him as a Messiah, that it is put into His mouth by the later community. Would you tolerate such a teaching?

PROF. I: Well, I think it would have to be dealt with on its own terms. The only way to deal with historical criticism is with historical criticism. That is, you have to get — to do the hard job of scholarship to show the other person what is what. That is, I think, what indeed has happened in connection with the scholarly world. There is a marvelous community of self-criticism, when somebody gets too far out on the limb, it gets sawed off by the community, and people come back to understand one another again. We have moved from all kinds of suppositions about Old Testament and New Testament to a situation where much of those theories have gone the way of all flesh. My more important concern would be: Do you believe Jesus is the Messiah?

Prof. I Transcript

p. 16

PROF. I: Why sure, the only purpose of using historical-critical methodology is because you are so concerned about the record! You don't use it because you don't give a darn about it. You want to be sure what it is that God has put

there for you. That is what you are doing it for, to be sure that God's Word is going to come through to you. Now, as a Lutheran preacher I address a text also with completely other purposes in mind. I have other resources rather than I bring to the text in addition to this historical-critical method apparatus, trying to find out what the text is, what the words mean, what the background was, and all this stuff. I also come to it — and that is where the Lutheran Confessions are critical — I also come to it as a Lutheran recognizing that what is important in any text of the Bible, any text of the Bible, is Jesus Christ. It is the good news of what God has done in the Person of Jesus Christ. That is the heart and core of the Bible, and that had better be there in my explication of any text of the Scripture from Genesis 1 to Revelation 21. So I bring that to bear, and when I am telling people, what text shall we take, take the text that X referred to here, Matthew 11, John the Baptist's question to Jesus. The critical question is not: Did He use all those words in exactly that way? Could He have said that? Sure, He could have said that. He could have said it just because all of those words appear in the Old Testament; He could have said it.

Prof. U Transcript

pp. 9-11

COMMITTEE: Yeah. The question, though, was: Can a whole narrative be made up and introduced, be introduced, can you view this as a viable option? In other words, I'm doing my exegetical work here, form and redaction criticism and all this *sachkritik*; I come to a particular point, and I will say (I'm just quoting from memory now) that Marxen, and I think is quoted by Perrin in his book, where he says with reference to John the Baptist, that this is quite obviously a sort of reenactment as it's described of Israel being in the wilderness, and he says it's very possible that John the Baptist never baptized in the Jordan, it's very possible that he never wore this camel's hair or had this funny diet and went out and preached in the wilderness; as a matter of fact, maybe he never left Jerusalem. And he says that as far as he is concerned this is a viable option. One may, as a result of his studies, reach this conclusion, looking and saying, Well, this is a reenactment, the church probably imaginatively developed this story. So we are talking about the matrix of something that happened, and of course you can also say that in order, with reference to John or with reference to Christ, the church imaginatively — I'm not talking about little variations, I'm talking about the whole address — that Christ, in order to put in the mouth of Christ something that was so Messianic consciousness and so on, would say that the church would imaginatively invent this particular. I am asking you, When you deal with Scripture yourself, personally, do you think that it's legitimate for you to come to such a conclusion as a result of your scholarly study?

PROF. U: O.K. I think again, there are really two questions that I'd like to address myself to. One is the limits — which is really not a confessional statement at all — is the limits of our ability as historians. As you are well aware, Julius Wellhausen said that the covenant, for example, since it is not mentioned in a number of the prophetic books, must have been a late development in Israel, in fact postexilic. George Mendenhall, who teaches at the University of Michigan, at Ann Arbor, under whom I studied for a brief time anyway, has shown, I think, from ancient history that is manifestly absurd and that the covenant in fact would only be conceivable as a form in the Mosaic period. So we can argue, you know, on I think the arrogance of scholarship at times, the limitations. That obviously is not the question that you are asking but is one to keep in mind, that just because one uses form criticism does not mean at all that he accepts everything the form critics do, even from a scholarly point of view. I would go on to that and say that if such a judgment, let's say, about the authenticity of a saying or not, would in any sense cut down the authority of the Gospel, it's clearly prohibited for me as a Lutheran exegete and that I constantly — I have to keep asking myself this question: Is there any discipline that I use, is there any approach, does it highlight the Gospel? And if it downgrades it, or if it shortcircuits it, I obviously stand in need of forgiveness.

COMMITTEE: Would I understand you correctly then that, suppose I were doing this, just what I was talking about,

but I said I still believe in Jesus Christ as Son of God and my Savior and my salvation comes only through Him, and I say as far as I am concerned, this doesn't downgrade the Gospel, if you believe that somebody else put something into Christ's mouth or somebody else developed a story about something which He never did, this doesn't bother me—I then have permission to do this—is this what you are saying?

PROF. U: I'd rather keep it in my own words. I said if what I do in any way downgrades the Gospel or undercuts its authority, or if I do this as part of my disobedience, then manifestly I am not affirming the Gospel as I should.

COMMITTEE: But you can conceive the possibility that this might be done without downgrading the Gospel?

PROF. U: Well, that's a judgment you're drawing.

COMMITTEE: What criterion would you set for an activity like that as to whether or not, in the instance I've given you, the Gospel is being downgraded or not? How would you decide?

PROF. U: Well, if the Gospel will lose its power to convince, to create faith, to testify to Jesus Christ, to convey the forgiveness of sins, to support people in their doubts and uncertainties. If it did any of these things or a dozen others, I don't want to leave anything out by inadvertence, then it would be downgrading the Gospel.

Prof. U Transcript

pp. 18-19

COMMITTEE: Well, trying to tie it together, maybe some of the things, the examples that X asked about and X asked about, we have all confessed the Scriptures as the written Word of God. What are the presuppositions that you bring to that confession, that would keep you from where others in using the historical-critical method have gone far beyond the example X mentioned, or that X mentioned to deny, say, the very resurrection? What presuppositions would keep you in the historical-critical method as a Lutheran theologian from this?

PROF. U: I suppose that one would say that's where one's confessional subscription would come in. One couldn't say the Apostles' Creed without affirming the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and that speaking strictly now from this kind of faith posture, I think there are a lot of other methodological reasons that could keep you away from such an assertion, let's say that plainly, people like Willie Marxen and others have gone beyond the limits of their discipline. I don't want to argue that point. I don't know Marxen that well. But that I would feel that my subscription to the Confessions, as well as my belief in Jesus who rose, maybe that's even prior, that I am absolutely persuaded that Jesus rose from the dead, because I have been convinced of that over the years a number of times through the announcement of that piece of good news to me; and that if my conclusions would lead me to another direction, I guess I would say I'd better examine my conclusions.

Prof. G Transcript

pp. 24-25

COMMITTEE: Several times in the CTM in introducing articles you have mentioned the use of historical-critical method and some in some claiming this method you know would deny the historical aspect of certain portions of Jesus' ministry, whether the cursing of the fig tree (no reference to anyone in St. Louis or anyplace in particular), but would deny certain aspects of Jesus' ministry as having a historical basis. Others claiming the same method go to deny—quoting the same method—deny the resurrection. Now A would not do this because he says this is vital to the Gospel. My question is what Lutheran presuppositions are there that keep you or me or anyone using this method from taking step B?

PROF. G: How much time do we have? It is a good question and a hard question. It needs to be faced. Number one, the historical-critical method as such is a method and you can get—it's neutral. I know that X wants to challenge me on that, so I will come back to say something else; at least I suspect you do. It is like a knife: you can cut the apple with it or you can cut your finger with it. In either case you don't throw the knife away. Now so many of the 19th-

century historical-critical theologians had some real pre-conceived ideas that they brought to their task; they were liberals, they were rationalists, etc., and these presuppositions I am convinced affected their outcome more than the method. Now there is a presupposition which I would argue is not built into the method, but I don't know if you want to hear me out on that argument. Let me just indicate that I am aware of the real problem here, namely, that history as defined by the 19th-century positivists assumes a closed universe and by definition excludes the possibility of miraculous. I don't think that that presupposition is built into the use of the historical-critical method per se, and if you want to pursue it further, I will be glad to talk about it further; but let me just make that statement to indicate at least that I have wrestled with this philosophical problem—Lutheran presuppositions that keep him from denying the reality of the resurrection. I think maybe here too I need to get autobiographical as well as theological, and I guess none of us want to make any clear-cut distinction between our—the way our lives develop and the way our theology developed. There are a number of factors at work here. Number one is the simple assumption that a document is to be believed as it stands unless there are good and valid reasons in the document or in its history to the contrary. When you finish First and Second Clement, then turn to Clementine recognitions and Clementine homilies, and just a wonder world—I am surprised TV script writers haven't discovered it yet. So there may be something in the document or in the history of the document that says maybe this is not to be taken literally. Number two, the warp and woof of Scripture is built pretty closely around the great promise of God, which we find in its greatest fulfillment in the resurrection. Number three, and, X, here I am back to my concept of tradition again. I am repeatedly helped when doubt assails me by either the creedal confessions of the church; the church has always believed this, and so, being a traditionalist, a conservative, my first response is to go with what the church has always believed. Or secondly (and this may be proper or improper), more often than not a brother will come up in my moment of doubt and say, "Well, let's think again about this thing." He may speak that word of God which helps me, or he may reassure me without speaking that word. There are a number of stories (I can use that word in a very neutral sense) in Scripture which I will not consider debatable as to whether or not they happened, and there are a combination of factors which lead me to that conclusion: the text, the signals in the text, the long tradition of the church, etc. I am not able to always decide this clearly and solely on the basis of the text itself. There are times when looking at the text will leave me in doubt. This is not because of the historical-critical method, it is because the claims of the text are fantastic, I guess.

Faculty Journal

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Dec. 9, 1970

STATEMENT ON EXEGETICAL METHODOLOGY

The undersigned members of the Exegetical Department at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, are unanimous in acknowledging—

1) The great acts wrought by God in the course of human history for the salvation of mankind, which events are witnessed to in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments;

2) The accusing and consoling words spoken by God through historical human beings, which words preceded, accompanied, and/or followed the events in which God acted;

3) Our obligation, as believing theologians who recognize the historical character of God's acts and God's words, to expound them with the aid of a rigorously historical methodology;

4) Our regret over the misunderstandings which have sometimes arisen in regard to the methods and presuppositions of historical criticism, and our concern to dispel such misunderstandings;

5) Our conviction that the events and words reported in the Scriptures bear an essential message for us and our contemporaries, and our dedication to the task of bringing out and proclaiming that message in all its simplicity and complexity.

In the following we enlarge on each of these points, especially in regard to matters currently under discussion.

1) As a fundamental presupposition of our exegetical work we recognize that the Creator God is and always has been actively at work in his universe, most significantly in a series of specific events in the history of mankind. These include his guidance of the forefathers of the Israelite nation, his deliverance of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt and bringing them through the wilderness into the land of Palestine which became their possession, his anointing of a line of kings through whom he exercised his rule, and climactically the sending of his Son who was born into that kingly line, lived and taught, died and rose again to found a new people of God, who have received his Spirit. We hold these to be real historical events, and we hold further that they have a historic importance far transcending the immediate situation in which they occurred.

2) God's intentions for mankind were not yet fulfilled when he had acted in historical events; he also deigned to speak to men in human language. Words from God accompanied each of the historic, permanently significant events to which the Scriptures testify. By these words God brought men to face their predicament without him, led men to accept his action in overcoming this predicament, and helped men to conform their lives to his will.

These words were spoken and written by God working through historical human beings, some of whom are known by name while others remain unknown to us. But all these words, at least in so far as they come eventually to be included in the canonical Scriptures of Old and New Testaments, were the very words of God to the situations in which they were first spoken or written.

3) Since God chose to deal with mankind through historic acts in human history and through the words of historical human beings, we are bound by these theological presuppositions to respect the historical character of the Scriptures which testify of him. For us whose faith requires us to take this historical viewpoint seriously, the intention of God in the Scriptures can be authoritatively elucidated only by a rigorous application of proper historical methodology. Anything less than this undergoes the risk of importing extraneous ideas and obscuring the divine intent.* To avoid such an outcome, a method of interpretation is needed which is critical, i.e., capable of discerning (χωρῶν, distinguishing, discriminating) between what is the author's and what is ours, what is original and what is later, what derives from one level and what from another.

For theological reasons, therefore, we have welcomed the development, over the years, of a more and more critical and scientific methodology for the study of historical sources. We recognize both the appropriate functions and the intrinsic limits of a number of techniques which now belong to the historical-critical method. These techniques, as they apply to a Biblical text, include:

(a) Linguistic study, to determine the meaning of the words and sentence constructions for the original author. Modern structural and semantic methodology can continue to make significant contributions to our understanding.

(b) Textual criticism, to establish as nearly as possible the reading of the text after its latest significant redaction, assumed to be the canonically authoritative form.

(c) Form criticism and stylistic study, to ascertain the genre of composition to which the unit belongs and the elements of prose or poetic style which characterize it. This aids in understanding the author's intent, by bringing out both the typical and the unique features of form and style in comparison with other texts.

(d) Study of the setting, to determine both the typical situation in the life of the people that would characterize any text belonging to this genre of composition and also, if possible, the specific historical occasion which gave rise to the individual text under study. The fuller our understanding of the original setting, the more likely we are to recapture the original intent of the text.

(e) Tradition history, to trace the transmission and development of the motifs or clusters of motifs (streams of tradition) from their origin to their appearance in the text under study, and even beyond. Comparative materials from

* We do not wish to imply, however, that the Spirit of God cannot work through the Scriptures when they are interpreted by other methods, e.g., allegorical.

outside the Bible may prove helpful either as analogies or as actual sources. Such a study can often significantly clarify not only the ideas of a text but also the intended impact on its initial hearers.

(f) Redaction history, to reconstruct the process by which the materials of the text under study were combined with other materials and edited until the book reached its canonical form. Besides showing how materials were progressively re-interpreted in new situations, this branch of study assists in understanding the larger framework within which the details have their place.

The purpose of employing all these techniques is to enlarge our understanding of the meaning intended by the author of the canonical book in his own time, on the assumption (see 2, above) that this is also the meaning initially intended by God himself.

The historical method as it applies to the understanding of a theologically important event begins with the list of techniques already given, since the Biblical word is certainly the most important historical evidence for reconstructing the events to which it witnesses and which it interprets. This and other types of historical evidence which may be available—for example, from other ancient documents or from archaeology—are then evaluated according to the normal principles of historical methodology pertaining to such evidence. The assumption throughout (see 1, above) is that God acted in the course of real human events, so that a better understanding of the historical events cannot but aid our appreciation of God's acts.

Thus by reason of our faith that God has both acted and spoken in human history we are compelled to adopt a rigorously scientific historical methodology as we seek to make out his action just as it originally occurred and his speech just as it was originally intended to be understood.

4) Misunderstandings in regard to the presuppositions and the methods of historical criticism have unfortunately arisen at times among both its professional practitioners and interested observers.

The very word "critical" or "criticism," which we have used in connection with the historical method, has negative connotations for some. There have admittedly been historical critics who practiced the methodology with presuppositions differing from ours. Certain scholars, for example, have come with a very skeptical world view and have allowed little or no room for God and faith. Some seem to have taken delight in promoting novelties and opposing all traditional views.

We are not such men. It is not the historical-critical method in itself that brings men to such positions, but the presuppositions with which they begin. The "criticism" which we practice is motivated by presuppositions of faith, and is intended to discern clearly among the various levels and possibilities in the situation being studied. (See further in 3, above). Our ultimate evaluation of the results obtained by this critical methodology arises not from the methodology itself but from our presuppositions, which are those of faith in God through Christ rather than those of pure naturalism, skepticism, or any other world view.

We recognize, however, that the devout application of scientific historical methodology, even under the presuppositions of faith which we bring to it, have at times led us to exegetical conclusions which surprise and disturb some observers. To this we must say that the precise results of Biblical study cannot be guaranteed in advance. Any attempt to prescribe an official exegesis must be resisted as the imposition of an authority above that of the Scriptures themselves. As men work prayerfully and critically, they may indeed uncover data or reach conclusions that are surprising, even disturbing, to themselves and others. Yet the Biblical word must be permitted an audience, even when it is disturbing.

The situation may for instance occur, and has occurred, where an honest application of the historical method (3, above) appears to uncover a discrepancy between the actual course of events (1, above) and the word about it preserved in the Scriptures (2, above). Because of our presuppositions we react to such a situation with a positive openness to what God may be wishing to teach us thereby, rather than with a negative judgment that would cause us to reject either the word or the act of God.

In all that we do as historical-critical exegetes, our most basic presuppositions are those of 1 and 2 above. Our appli-

cation of the methodology and our evaluation of the results arise initially from those assumptions of faith, and all other axioms are subsidiary to them.

5) Not only do we affirm that God has acted and spoken in history, we also believe that his acts and words have altered history, including our own. Thus our interest in searching the Scriptures is not a merely antiquarian one, but is enlivened by the conviction that through them God still speaks to and acts in men today.

We are therefore also interested in the later steps beyond the strictly exegetical task. We are concerned about the process of extracting the Biblical message for our own day and applying it to ourselves, our fellow Christians, and all

people today. We are convinced that this can be done most authoritatively when full cognizance is taken of both the similarities and the differences between the setting in which any word from God was first spoken and that in which it is now to be re-applied. In the fulfillment of this task we call upon those who are expert in the methodologies of historical, systematic, and practical theology to join us and add their appropriate contributions.

With a spirit of mutual submission to the God who has acted and spoken we also invite our colleagues of those departments to evaluate our exegetical work from the perspective of the principles we have enunciated, and we welcome their criticism when we unconsciously depart from them.

5e, 2. The Findings Concerning the Historical-Critical Method and the Seminary View on the Historical Value of the Biblical Accounts

It is important to note that one of the announced "controls" on the historical-critical method involves Gospel "reductionism," wherein items and events in the Scriptures not touching on the Gospel need not be defended and upheld. Another control involves a use of the Confessions in a manner that makes the Confessions the prime norm instead of the Scriptures, inasmuch as the Confessions are said to protect us from allowing basic Christian dogma from being denied. The general presupposition that the Scriptures are the Word of God is in effect negated by the insistence that the "human side" of the Scriptures necessarily makes them subject to every human limitation. The references to guidance by the Spirit, which seems "to distinguish sharply between the letter and the spirit" (*Smalcald Articles*, Part III, Art. VIII, 3), appears to open the door to a mystical or "enthusiastic" approach. The reference to scholarship imposes an external control on the Scriptures in that the scholarship rather than the Word itself is the criterion.

But the real test of the assertion that Seminary professors use a "baptized" and purified version of the historical-critical method is to be found in the answers of the men to various questions concerning how various sections of the Bible are interpreted.

Note first that the *historic events* noted in the Scriptures are frequently set aside by the manner in which the text is interpreted. This point does not have reference to kings and battles and casualty reports but to a broad spectrum of items reported in Scripture, both in the Old and in the New Testament. In many instances it is said that the way in which the Scriptures tell a story need not be accepted at its face value, because a certain Biblical text is supposedly a part of a document written much later than the event (source hypothesis — a part of the historical-critical method) and is often said to have been written in an editorializing vein for a certain theological purpose. The final result is that one can not be certain that the events recorded in the Scriptures as God's mighty acts in salvation history really took place at all. Nor can one be certain that the words Scripture attributes to various individuals were actually spoken by them. It is claimed that they were written centuries later as an "interpretation."

In handling Biblical history in this manner, Seminary professors are following the historical-critical methodology as it is commonly practiced. By questioning or allowing the questioning of the authenticity of events and words recorded in the Scriptures, they introduce an uncertainty principle that downgrades the authority and credibility of the Bible and thus of the Gospel.

The Seminary faculty states that the facts of Biblical history are important. Yet the transcripts show a willingness to follow the historical-critical method in undermining the authenticity of the Biblical record regarding the facts. When this contradiction is pointed out, they counter by saying that the important thing is not: Did it happen or didn't it? but: Did what happen? i.e.: What is the significance of the event?

It is, of course, self-evident that the significance of God's action in history with reference to the plan of salvation is the main point in theology.

But the seminary in its position (cf. *A Parting Peace*, Part IV, printed along with the transcripts following this section) appears to evade the real question at issue. The real question is: Can the significance of God's action in history and of His words through His prophets, apostles, and evangelists continue to have meaning if the action in history never actually took place or if what happened is really quite different from what the Bible tells? Can Christian theology in effect be suspended in midair without its foundation on the mighty acts of God related in the Scriptures?

In this connection we need to note how the Lutheran confessors handled the matter of the historicity of Biblical accounts. The plain answer is that they faced no problem in accepting both the historicity of the Biblical accounts and Biblical characters and at the same time relating them directly to their meaning for man's salvation.

It is interesting that the Lutheran confessors speak of faith as trust. It is not enough to accept certain historical facts intellectually. The confessors argue that faith must cling to the promise of the forgiveness of sins. Note, however, how Melancthon expresses it three times in *Apology IV*. Faith is not "mere historical knowledge" (IV, 48); it is not "simply" historical knowledge (IV, 50); it is not "an idle historical knowledge" (IV, 61). Faith must be more than that. "It is a firm acceptance of the promise."

Nonetheless it is also evident that the confessors presumed historical knowledge of God's saving acts. Knowledge is not enough. Faith and trust must be added. But historical knowledge is very definitely treated as a part of faith. Historical knowledge is *not* dispensable. See *Apology IV*, 50-51: "Paul clearly shows that faith does *not simply* mean historical knowledge but is a firm acceptance of the promise (Rom. 4:16). . . . So it is not enough to believe that Christ was born, suffered, and was raised unless we add this article, the purpose of the history, 'the forgiveness of sins.'" (Cf. also *Apology IV*, 304)

The manner in which the Confessions treat sacred history in general shows an acceptance of and respect for the Biblical narrative. They speak repeatedly of Adam and Eve, of Abraham and his faith, of David and Saul, of Elijah and Elisha and Daniel. The fall of man, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah — the events of the Old Testament, as well as the New — all are taken by them as historical in the sense of events that really happened and involving also people who really lived.

In short, it must be recognized as beyond dispute that for the Lutheran confessors the historical nature of the Bible was accepted without question. To depart from this position, under whatever guise, is to depart from the view of Scripture held by the Lutheran confessors.

In this connection, cf. Appendix IV: *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, Section IV, "F. The Infallibility of Scripture."

For documentation see the following transcripts of interviews with the St. Louis professors.

Documentation

Prof. K Transcript

pp. 10-12

COMMITTEE: Just one more question: Would you explain what you meant by historicized credo document?

PROF. K: Well, that — the term — I may have used it, but it doesn't strike me as my terminology — but I would mean that the intent of the document was to make a statement about Yahweh and His Word shaping history rather than that the document has as its intent to recount just what happened. That term just doesn't sound like me in connection with the Succession Narrative, so I don't know precisely.

COMMITTEE: Professor K, you would not agree, then, with these statements, go beyond what you said you're acquainted with, I quote: "Instead of history we have a kind of historical novel" — This is in reference to the Succession Narrative. And from the same author: "The Succession Narrative is a piece of political propaganda justifying Solomon's claim to be the true successor to David in a situation where this claim may well have still been disputed." Now, from what you have been saying, I would understand you to reject this out of hand and quite emphatically?

PROF. K: Well, I don't know. I don't use the term propaganda; I do attempt to point out that the author is writing this to indicate that it is Yahweh's will that Solomon be king, you know, and he's writing it for people in that situation who were questioning whether you ought to have a king at all, and if Solomon rather than a descendant of Saul ought to be king, and the author is — I guess a person could use the term propaganda — he is making propaganda for Solomon, but his propaganda is that Solomon's succession is Yahweh's will.

COMMITTEE: Would he make, present a historical novel rather than straightforward history to do that?

PROF. K: Well, again now, historical novel isn't my terminology; I don't use it; I don't think I do. Do you?

X: I don't recall your ever saying it.

COMMITTEE: Well, I'm not quoting it as having come from you, but I'm just wondering if you take exception to that kind of terminology, as well as not using it.

PROF. K: I don't use it, but I think I would agree with the

point that this person is making, that this is written to people to assure them that it is Yahweh's will that Solomon be king, that they should accept him as king. Insofar as that could be called propaganda, I guess I could accept that term.

COMMITTEE: I'll give you another example that might give you a clearer opportunity here. You recommend in your article *Introduction to the Old Testament* by Selin-Fohrer — now I'm curious as to some of the positions that Fohrer takes as to whether or not you are then in agreement with that. For example, on page 93 he talks about the narrative literary types and traditions; he says the sagas and legends were personalized and adapted to the personal element in Yahwism. The sanctuary legend of Bethel consequently appears as a personal experience of Jacob, and the narrative of the rape of Dinah, and subsequent revenge of Genesis 34, Shechem, who was in love with the girl, brothers enraged at her disgrace, and Jacob, who suspects trouble, are depicted so graphically as individuals that the reader scarcely realizes that the story deals with national and tribal groups. Would you agree with that position?

PROF. K: The story in Genesis 34 I think in the context of the Yahwist is trying to say something about the exclusion of the tribes of Levi and Simeon, to get to the emphasis that is laid on Judah and Joseph in the blessing of Jacob. In my teaching of Genesis 34, I say about that, and that's about all, because that's about all that I have assurance of that I understand. Now, I am not at all sure that the point that I am trying to make is specifically the point that Fohrer is trying to make here, but I guess that I come off, you know, sounding as if these fathers of the tribe were significant for the tribal, the later tribal development.

COMMITTEE: I'm sorry, I didn't catch the last of that.

PROF. K: They were significant in the later tribal development.

COMMITTEE: What Fohrer is saying here, though, is that actually this is again a saga or legend personalized, it's attributed to a person, Jacob for example, in reality that never happened to Jacob. Is this acceptable in your opinion?

PROF. K: Well, it depends on what Fohrer is trying to say there. If he is trying to say it didn't happen and so there is no message, that is not acceptable in my opinion.

COMMITTEE: So you're saying that there actually had to have been something that happened in terms of these individuals or in terms of the tribes?

PROF. K: That the events in the ancestors of the tribes, the individuals had significance for the later developments, yes.

COMMITTEE: Well now, again he makes a statement on page 124, at the settling in Canaan, it was by a number of different groups, such as the Moses host, the Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob tribes and groups. Apparently what he does here is to take the position that Abraham and Isaac and Jacob were not patriarchs as such, but these were simply names given to various groups that settled in the area, and then later on somebody writing that up historically personalizes that again. Now in your opinion, for a Lutheran theologian, would that be an acceptable way to deal with Scripture?

PROF. K: Well, I think that I see considerable Biblical evidence for a tribal as well as a national settlement. The evidence that I see for this is particularly in Judges 1 and in certain parts of Joshua 13 to 19, makes nothing of the kind of tribal development that he is referring to, you know, Moses tribes, Abram tribes, and so forth, and so I make nothing of that kind of division; I do talk about the Scriptures as talking, as presenting both tribal and the national development. I can't even say what century I would place the tribal settlement in; I can pretty well say in what century I would place the national conquest.

COMMITTEE: How would you view the patriarchs, Abraham, Jacob, Isaac? Are these historic characters who really lived, or is this again a personalized legend?

PROF. K: The earliest writer about them, as I see it, is the Yahwist. He, in his writing about them and in spelling out the entire salvation history of Israel, uses sources that have come to him in the tradition of the Israelite people. I am most interested in finding out what the Yahwist is saying and what he is asserting about God in His presence and activity with Israel as the Yahwist is saying this to his

readers. He uses these sources, he doesn't discuss whether he considers them historical or not, I really don't know. Now, having said that, I really don't know, I am cognizant of the fact that they describe customs that are known to be current in 16th, 17th century, not to be known at the time he is writing, and so I tend to present this, these sources as coming from that time, but having, you know, that's the evidence that I have for that, and I suppose I would prefer to answer your question by saying I simply don't know whether the Yahwist, who is writing this history to tell us about God, conceived of these people as historical persons or not; if you want my opinion, yes.

Prof. A Transcript

pp. 12-13

COMMITTEE: Just a question, Prof. A, about the Deuteronomistic historian. Did the Deuteronomistic historian select real historical events, or did he contrive some of them? As I understand your article, he was shaping the things for a theological purpose. Now did he invent events, did he — as someone has characterized but went on there in the Old Testament — did he alter the past in the light of the present, to make his point?

PROF. A: I think it's clear that we view history today and ask questions differently than has ever really been done in the past, that is, in the distant past. Therefore it is important, I think, that we beware, try very hard to use the right categories and recognize that the Scriptures are written in, I would affirm, in the categories of its day. That God used men to write the Scriptures, that's what inspiration says. O.K. So. Did he invent? I would say no, he did not invent anything, and I would also say I believe this is a term which is not terribly useful. Now, if you ask, how does the Deuteronomistic historian interpret past history. There's a tremendous amount of data that he has, and he wants to tell the history of Israel, but he wants to tell in such a way that its meaning for his day, which is ultimately in the exile, although I think there may have been an earlier edition in Josiah's time, but in any case, he wants to tell the meaning of that history to his day, how does he interpret it? We, I suppose, would list as we do in a sermon first the sources and then give our interpretation. What he does is: he weaves his interpretation with comments in the midst of it, so and basically this is done through speeches and through, or his own comment like at 2 Sam. 17 at the end of the fall of the Northern Kingdom he explains why this happened. Also does it by the framework into which he sets the stories of the judges. You remember this framework that comes with each of the judges: Israel sinned, and then God handed them over to the enemies, and they cried out, and then God answered them and set a savior, raised up a judge or a savior. And then also in Kings, well enough said there. Now, I suppose the question you're getting at is best, it deals mostly with something like the speeches. Take Solomon's speech at the temple, at the temple dedication. I personally would think it historically probable that Solomon had a speech at the temple as king and a prayer. Now is the speech that we have there, if you had one of these objects over here, the tape recorder there, would it have recorded just those words? And I would say probably not. Now why? Because the nature of the language seems to me is quite Deuteronomistic and like that of the Deuteronomistic historian and also because the meaning of the temple is explained in terms of what its meaning is for the people in exile. I don't doubt that by a special revelation Solomon could have done it this way; I don't think that's a question; it's whether he did. And I would say no, and in this speech the Deuteronomistic historian is pointing out that the temple is a house of prayer; and he is, and Solomon in this prayer is, and the Deuteronomistic historian is saying this is a house towards which we pray, God will answer your prayer when you in faith turn and pray toward the temple; He will forgive. This is an emphasis three or four times in this whole prayer, and this is precisely the need of the people in exile. They have sinned. They need God's forgiveness and then, for example, "if they sin against Thee and You carry them away captive to the land of the enemy, yet if they lay it to heart in the land to which they have been carried captive and repent and make supplication to Thee in the land of their captives, if they repent" and so forth and so forth, "then hear Thou in heaven, Thy dwelling place, their prayer and their supplication." So he is calling on his countrymen not to give up the faith even though all seems lost, but to rather, to repent, to ask for forgiveness, and is assuring

them that God will hear them in exile. To keep the faith, that is the message, repent and keep the faith.

Prof. L Transcript

p. 21

COMMITTEE: But the question which I am leading up to in connection with this is: Would you give us your intention really with Bultmann and what it was particularly the point you want to make here and how you appraise it?

PROF. L: I feel that these men, despite absorption in perhaps overmuch catering to the antisupernaturalism of our time, do have one thing going for themselves which our Lord said to Thomas eight days after Easter: "Because thou hast seen, thou hast believed; blessed are they which have not seen and yet have believed." These men struck me, I have embarrassingly few volumes of Bultmann; I am not a peer of my colleagues at all in Bultmannese. It seems to me in a few places at least where he spoke and a couple of these other men, that he did seem to say (and I thought this was a valuable insight): Faith does not depend on the facts, the documentation, the buttressing, the historical accuracy of what you are building your faith on. Faith is a supernatural act. This is all that I was trying to support in this.

Prof. H. Transcript

pp. 9-12

COMMITTEE: Prof. H, when last year at the Council of Presidents I think you presented this paper or similar to it, and then at buzz sessions we had the privilege of looking at specific passages on the light of this entry into Jerusalem, cleansing the temple, and so forth, and also the cursing of the fig tree I recall was one. My question really is twofold. Number one, do you consider it legitimate for a Lutheran theologian to say that events like this, without going into a lengthy thing on the cursing of the fig tree, but events like this from the ministry of Jesus need not be accepted as having happened historically but were placed into a historical setting around one of the sayings of Jesus? That is the first part of the question. The second would be whether this possibility of doing this, whether you personally would do it or not, whether this possibility is inherent in form criticism.

PROF. H: Let me answer the second part first. Form criticism as it developed took as one of its canons a very negatively critical point of view. It said that anything in the Gospels for which we can find an appropriate *Sitz im Leben Kirche* cannot be said with historical probability to go back to Jesus Himself. That is therefore a part of the history of form criticism. That kind of a negative historical judgment is part of the history of form criticism, and yet I don't think it is a necessary part of the practice of form criticism. It is a part of a—it is a canon of some early form criticism which I reject. But it is not necessarily inherent in every application and use of the method. That is an answer I think to the second part of your question. And as far as the first part of the question, I feel that rather than commenting on some hypothetical exegete it would be better if you could ask me a question about my use of the method. How I practice it for example. Could you sharpen it up in that way?

COMMITTEE: Well, in practicing it I assume that you also have to then look at the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the method itself, and I am simply speaking in general terms as to whether you consider this for yourself and/or others a legitimate thing for a Lutheran theologian to say: What is placed into the historical setting in the Gospels is not necessarily historical, though certainly it proclaims the Gospel truth or whatever.

PROF. H: Without having an example to deal with I find it hard to—

COMMITTEE: Take the cursing of the fig tree.

PROF. H: The cursing of the fig tree. Did it happen or didn't it happen?

COMMITTEE: Well, is it all right to say it didn't?

PROF. H: Do I say that it didn't, or is it all right to say that it didn't?

COMMITTEE: Both.

COMMITTEE: Say, can a Lutheran theologian with Lutheran presuppositions say that it did not?

PROF. H: It would seem to me that a question like that, Did it happen, or didn't it happen? is an exegetical question and could be discussed exegetically concerning its historical probability concerning the form of the narrative, concerning the history of that particular piece of tradition by Lutherans. It is therefore an exegetical matter rather than a doctrinal matter.

COMMITTEE: Well, I am not asking that really, although I guess that you could dialog on it too; but my question then; I assume you're saying then that it is possible.

PROF. H: Sure, just as it would be possible to discuss whether there was such a person historically as the good Samaritan or whether this story is a parable. It is not called a parable by Luke, but we are told of a man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves. Did he or didn't he?

COMMITTEE: Did Jesus curse the fig tree or didn't he, Prof. H? As far as you are concerned?

PROF. H: Yes, He did curse the fig tree as far as I am concerned. That is your other question. You have the question also of the legitimacy of considering whether—

COMMITTEE: No, not considering whether—excuse me, I guess I wasn't clear. The legitimacy of coming to the conclusion as a Lutheran exegete that this is not a historical event.

PROF. H: It is not a conclusion to which I have come, but if it is legitimate to discuss whether it actually happened or not on exegetical grounds, I think it is legitimate to discuss it on exegetical grounds, but I don't think it is a doctrinal question. Just as in the case of the good Samaritan it would seem to me that that could be discussed exegetically, and a person may or may not come to the conclusion that there was actually a man who did go down about whom Jesus was speaking.

COMMITTEE: Prof. H, let me try it once here. By exegetical question I think most people, at least I, to be more specific, look upon it as to determine what the text means. Now I think what X is asking is: What do you do with an individual who decides on the basis of form criticism or any allied type of activity he doesn't have any question as to necessarily what it means. The question isn't what, why did Christ do this, what lesson do we derive from it? That you would normally say I think would be exegetical activity. The question is whether in fact this took place. Now I suppose one might say, Is it a parable and so forth? But there isn't any evidence in the text to that. Let me give you a different example that might be easier to handle. Perrin in *Redaction Criticism* quotes Marxen, and Marxen is talking about John the Baptist in the Gospel of Mark. And says the juxtaposition, this is Perrin first, to the Old Testament prophecy concerning the wilderness in Mark 1:3 and the appearance of John the Baptist in the wilderness in verse 4 shows us that John the Baptist is here being interpreted as the fulfiller of these prophecies and as such the forerunner of Jesus. But this means that the reference to the wilderness in verse 4, whatever may have been the origins in the tradition, is not a geographical reference at all but rather is a theological statement. Then he quotes Marxen: "The wilderness is not a geographical location. It is not permissible to reflect as to where it could lie. This reference is not intended to give a location for the work of John the Baptist, rather 'in the wilderness' qualifies the Baptist as the one who fulfills Old Testament prophecy. It might almost be said the Baptist would even be the one who came in the desert even if in his whole life he had never once been anywhere near the desert." That is a specific example. Is that an exegetical question?

PROF. H: Well, I think that is an exegetical question. It is one where exegetes differ. I find that in reading the Gospel of Mark there probably are not very many exegetes who would agree with the negative historical judgment that Perrin and Marxen seem to be making there. But evidently he is discussing it as an exegetical matter. And it is something to be considered exegetically.

Prof. I Transcript

p. 9

COMMITTEE: Well, is it right a priori with a confessional *Vorverstaendniss* of Scripture to say that there is something here which Luke-Acts explicitly puts into the mouth of St. Paul and to say that that cannot be harmonized with what St. Paul really says in First Corinthians?

PROF. I: I don't know. I haven't asked the question before.

COMMITTEE: Would you be disturbed if one of your professors would expound, using the historical-critical method, the exegesis of Corinthians and Acts in that fashion and say now you have two points of view here that cannot be harmonized?

PROF. I: Well, I don't know, I guess I would be concerned, yes, because we have all kinds of different emphases in the Scripture, different emphases between the Gospel of John and the synoptics and between the synoptics and Peter, and Peter and Paul, and what not. These are varying emphases. I find them to be marvelously in harmony.

COMMITTEE: Are emphases in theology, emphases in doctrine and content, emphases in terms of historical statements, differing in what respect?

PROF. I: Well, you have the book open here on the *Gospel and the Theological Task*, and I have gone to the trouble of trying to distinguish between these various terms and have attempted to say that I think we need to be clear on what it is we mean by the terms we use. I am not going to live or die by a particular definition of a term, just so long as we use terms the same way. And I distinguish between Gospel on the one hand and doctrine or dogma on the other and theology in the third place.

Prof. M Transcript

p. 8

COMMITTEE: Would you say then that you regard these patriarchal narratives as them being in every way historical in the sense that they correspond to fact? Or is there room for the position that while they might be, let's say 90 percent historical, they might be 10 percent nonfactual?

PROF. M: I suppose I would have to say that I can't think of any, and it's just because I am not able to recall this that quickly. I can't think of any statement in the historical narratives of the patriarchs where I would have to say: Well, maybe a certain percentage of this is not historically valid. I would conceive of a possibility that in the text that we have, for the purpose for which it was written, there could be things which would not necessarily correspond precisely to *wie es eigentlich geschehen ist*.

COMMITTEE: So there is this possibility. Would you regard this as being divisive in any way in the church if a person took this position? In other words, suppose I take a given spot in Genesis or Exodus or Deuteronomy or whatever, and say now I am convinced on the basis of my studies of the background of this, and so on, that this is added for theological reasons, and I'm convinced by the line of reasoning that this really didn't take place, therefore, I will not accept the text at this point?

PROF. M: O.K. Now you've broadened this beyond the patriarchal narratives when you introduce the possibility of Exodus and Deuteronomy —

COMMITTEE: Yes, yes, stretch it out —

PROF. M: If we could stretch it out beyond that, I could point to — I'm sure you could too — to passages in the Old Testament which describe a historical event but which do so in terms of what I call divergent parallels. Which would suggest to me that the Biblical writers who record these divergent parallels, and in some cases put them down side by side, were not concerned about the blow-by-blow account of precisely what happened but that they were concerned primarily with the theological content, the theological message of that which they are recording.

Prof. D Transcript

pp. 27—28

COMMITTEE: Just to wrap up a little bit on historical-critical method. You reviewed in one of the *CTM*'s, I think back in '68, Von Rad's commentary on Deuteronomy, and in that and I think this is rather typical of the approach of Von Rad and others — he says on page 28: "The sermons in

Deuteronomy are addressed to Israel in the form of words of Moses now near to his death when they arrived in the land of Moab after their wanderings. This fiction is maintained consistently throughout the whole of Deuteronomy but really isn't fiction. In fact these sermons were addressed to Israel in the latter periods of the monarchy." And then he goes on to give his line of reasoning. Are you in agreement with Von Rad on that?

PROF. D: I remember Prof. X once tried to come to grips with this, and I have every admiration for his way of getting at these things. He said that essentially the Pentateuchal materials are Moses for our day, for the day of whoever a man is writing for. I wouldn't call it fiction. That I think is a bad choice of words. I think it is important that you recognize that indeed the people who were speaking that maintained that the spirit of Moses for example as in Numbers 12:11 and 12, where the spirit of (chapter 11 rather) the spirit of Moses is transferred from one to the other, that these men speaking in the spirit of Moses, making it clear that their words were dependent upon Moses, could see no other person and could credit the truth that they were speaking in their generation to no other person than Moses since indeed it was derived from him. And I would maintain that they were speaking in their generation dependent upon Moses, bringing Moses up to date for their day and age, but that they should somehow or other credit it to someone else than the true person from whom it was derived would be abhorrent to such people.

Faculty Statement to Graduates

Pentecost 1972

A Parting Peace, Section IV

May the Holy Spirit

Whom the Father sends in Jesus' name,

Bring these words to your remembrance:

"ANYONE WHO LOVES ME WILL HEED WHAT I SAY
... HE WHO DOES NOT LOVE ME DOES NOT HEED
WHAT I SAY." (John 14:23-24)

A moment ago we said that the inspiring by the Holy Spirit dare not be separated from the facts of history. The converse is also true: the facts of biblical history cannot be understood without the Holy Spirit. Without Him to teach us, we might still retain all sorts of facts, but not as Gospel facts, hence not the facts of Scripture. We do run the danger of forgetting that. We tend to reduce the things which happened in biblical history — for example, Jesus' virgin birth or His resurrection or the Exodus — reduce them to where we can no longer see what really was happening there "for us men and for our salvation." All we have left then is the fact that this or that miracle took place. That much many a pagan believes. So do the devils. Once we have stripped these facts of their real Gospel secret, what good does it do to ask, "Do you believe that they happened or don't you?" Of course they happened. But that does not require believing in any evangelical sense of faith. So the first question is not, "Did it happen or didn't it?" No, the first question is, "Did what happen?" For example, what really happened when Jesus was born of a virgin? Or when He suffered, died and was buried? What does it mean when the Large Catechism says, "All this in order to become my Lord?" (The Creed, 31). Only as we first answer that question, discerning the Lordship of Jesus in and through those events, do we thereby answer the other question ("did it happen?") in a way that really honors our Lord. That is possible only by faith in Christ, out of love for Him. For as Jesus says, in order to "heed what I say" it is necessary first to "love me." And that is why He sends the Holy Spirit.

"He who does not love Me," says our Lord, "does not heed what I say," even though that man may *seem* to get the biblical facts straight. He really does not get the facts straight, not even the simplest facts, not even those facts which seem hardly miraculous at all. For he does not understand what really happened.

It was that way with the disciples. For, as Jesus said, it was because they did not love Him that they could not grasp what in fact was happening. Even the elementary event of Jesus' death, His "going away," the disciples misunderstood. True, if someone had asked them whether His dying happened or not, they would of course have answered that it did. And in a sense they were right. He did die. But what they would have meant by His dying was all wrong. The

dying which they thought was happening never really happened at all. They were too afraid, too unloving, too dispirited to see that *where* Jesus was going was home and that the One to *whom* He was going was His own Father. So what point would there have been in asking the disciples before they received the Spirit, "Did Jesus' death happen or not?" No, the question which needed to be answered first is, "Did *what* happen?" "Which death?" The death they originally had in mind did not really occur.

We all want to heed our Lord's Word. That too is something which we in our Synod all have in common. We all want to believe what His Word says to us, truly believe it. None of us wants to deny or even to abridge what all was happening in the biblical history. All of us yearn to perceive how those wondrous happenings, each and every one of them, are bound inextricably to what God was there doing for our judgment and salvation. We all know that without that "for us" no event in Scripture is yet a subject for faith, an acting out of Jesus' Lordship. What we are also finding out to our sorrow is that this constant connection between biblical history and biblical Gospel can be treacherously difficult to discern in each and every case. No wonder, such discerning is humanly impossible without our being taught by the Holy Spirit. This difficulty of ours, perhaps more than any other in our whole theological task, reflects how remiss we have been in doing our biblical homework. All of us have. Now it comes home to us how utterly dependent we are, for our reading of the Scriptures, upon the love of Christ and the leading of His Spirit.

**Pages from 1972-73 Catalog
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis**

EO-307. PSALMS.

Survey of Psalter as a whole. Exegetical study of Hebrew text of selected Psalms. Analysis of Psalms *Gattungen* and their *Sitz im Leben* in Old Testament worship. Study of major theological themes of Psalter. 3 hours.

EO-308. OLD TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION I.

An isagogical survey of the Pentateuch, Former Prophets and Writings (except Psalms and Daniel) together with a consideration of historical backgrounds and theological motifs. 3 hours.

EO-309. OLD TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION II.

An isagogical survey of the Latter Prophets and Daniel together with a consideration of historical backgrounds and theological motifs. 3 hours.

EO-311. OLD TESTAMENT APOCALYPTIC.

Investigation of the apocalyptic literature of the Old Testament in terms of its connection with Old Testament prophecy, relation to intertestamental apocalyptic, and theological relevance. 3 hours.

**EO-401. STUDIES IN THE PENTATEUCH:
YAHWIST STRATUM**

Detailed exegetical analysis of the theology of the Yahwist Stratum described from investigation of the stories and traditions of which it was composed. The message conveyed by these stories and traditions in the literary and historical context of Pentateuch. 3 hours.

**EO-402. STUDIES IN THE PENTATEUCH:
DEUTERONOMIC CODE.**

Detailed exegetical analysis of the Deuteronomistic Code, including determination of precise contents and historical background. Investigation of exhortations and laws of which Code is composed. The message conveyed by these laws in literary and historical context of Pentateuch. Theology of the Code. 3 hours.

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Introductory and advanced courses in Aramaic, Ugaritic, Arabic or Akkadian as need and interest dictate. (Good working knowledge of Hebrew essential.) 3 hours.

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PERIOD.**

Critical analysis of selected texts and/or traditions found in this literature. 3 hours.

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Study of Old Testament world, history and message in light of archaeological discoveries in Palestine and Ancient Near East. Primary archaeological reports, excavated artifacts and slides utilized whenever possible. 3 hours.

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Historical and/or topical analysis of theological concepts and theological systems in the Old Testament. 3 hours.

EO-409. CREATION THEOLOGY.

A seminar on the patterns and motifs of creation texts in ancient myth, Old Testament and intertestamental literature. Current significance of creation theology for modern man and his relation to environment. 3 hours.

EO-410. THE WISDOM OF JOB.

Analysis of the biblical text with focus on human suffering, ethical motivation, Job's attempts at self-vindication and their rebuttal, and justification as the work of God alone. 3 hours.

EO-418. STUDIES IN THE LATTER PROPHETS (AMOS).

The techniques and results of exegetical methodology as applied to the Book of Amos in Hebrew. Study of the earliest "writing prophet" and the continuing theological and social significance of his message. 3 hours.

EXEGETICAL THEOLOGY

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Independent study project for graduate students under supervision of selected instructor on basis of student-prepared prospectus. Prospectus form available from School for Graduate Studies. 3 hours.

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Students may register for these credits in any quarter. Credits must be earned before the S. T. M. degree is awarded. 3 hours.

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E-809. EXTENSIVE READINGS.

Extensive readings in an area not normally offered in other courses, on the basis of a selected bibliography prepared by the department. Final paper to summarize various interpretations or to make coherent pattern of readings. Final examination to evaluate breadth of reading and insights gained. Prospectus form available from School for Graduate Studies. 3 hours.

E-831. PROBLEMS OF HERMENEUTICS.

An investigation of basic hermeneutical issues: the translator as interpreter, the canon as a hermeneutical problem, inspiration and allegory, tradition as interpreter, "what it meant and what it means," "the New Hermeneutic." 3 hours.

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ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR**

Seminars in the major problems of Pentateuch, Former Prophets, Latter Prophets and Writings, respectively. The core courses of the Old Testament graduate program in which the student develops a critical exegetical methodology through extensive readings, research papers, and class dialog under the guidance of at least two instructors in each seminar. (Knowledge of German required.) Class limit: 5 students per seminar. Admission by prior consent of instructor. Each: 3 hours.

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Detailed exegetical study of the Hebrew text of this first portion of Genesis. 3 hours.

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Seminar studies in the Book of Exodus focusing on the significance of the exodus event for Old and New Testament theology. Key chapters discussed on basis of Hebrew text. 3 hours.

EO-820. SEMINAR IN DEUTERONOMIC THEOLOGY.

Description of the theology of the Deuteronomistic-Deuteronomistic work on the basis of an investigation of the messages which the work as a whole and its various parts conveyed to the historical situations to which they were addressed. 3 hours.

EO-825. STUDIES IN BIBLICAL POETRY.

Exegetical study of representative examples of lyric poetry from the earliest (e.g., Exodus 15 and Judges 5) to the latest (e.g., Luke 1 and 2) in the Bible. Particular attention to *Gattung*-analysis and stylistics. Comparative materials, notably from Ugarit and Qumran, are also drawn upon, though

ability to work in Semitic languages other than Hebrew is not presupposed. 3 hours.

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Analysis of selected crucial points in the dialog sections of the Book of Job. (Available to students in Graduate Program in Pastoral Counseling as an Area B elective.) 3 hours.

EO-837. SEMINAR IN THE PSALTER.

Investigation and evaluation of contemporary approaches to the Psalter. Research assignments on basis of Hebrew texts and thorough analysis of scholarly literature of past 50 years. 3 hours.

5e, 3. The Findings Concerning the Use of the Historical-Critical Method and the Determination of the Intent of the Biblical Authors

It is accepted by Biblical interpreters in general that to understand a given section of Scripture it is necessary to determine the *intent*, or purpose, of the author. What is he attempting to tell his readers?

This search for intent, however, is used by some professors to justify stating subjectively that the intent of the author is only to teach a theological truth, and not to give historical information. In this way the historical information may be disregarded or rejected. This technique becomes a reductionistic hermeneutical device and in practice results in casting doubt on a great deal of the factual, historical material of the Scriptures. This principle, if extended, leads to the undermining of the authenticity of any and all of the mighty acts of God related in the Scriptures, and thus of the Gospel itself. It is unsatisfactory to claim that the creeds of the church are a "control" governing this phase of the historical-critical method. This view, however, *de facto* elevates the creeds over the Scriptures.

Cf. again Appendix IV: *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, Section IV, "B. The Purpose of Scripture," and IV, "F. The Infallibility of Scripture," par. 6 on "intent."

For an illustration of this point see the following transcripts.

Documentation

Prof. K Transcript

pp. 21—22

COMMITTEE: How do you understand the image of God that we find in Genesis, man created in God's image, and then in connection with the fall? Were men, either Adam or Eve or somebody else, originally perfect and fell, or what does—or does that say something else?

PROF. K: The image-of-God material is in the Priestly source. The Priestly source does not have the fall account, and so I don't see, in my understanding of the theology that uses the fall account and the image-of-God account, the relationship between these two.

COMMITTEE: Are you saying that the image of God occurred in one source, the fall occurs in another, therefore, you can't make any connection between them? Is that what you're saying?

PROF. K: I'm saying that I do not make a connection between them in my teaching as I try to present these sources, and I would maintain that the intent of the Pentateuch is not to make such a connection.

Prof. K Transcript

pp. 19—20

COMMITTEE: Do you believe that the Scripture teaches an original, real Adam and Eve, and a fall in which they were involved? Or is this a general way of describing the fact that early man didn't live up to God's expectations or that man in general has never lived up to God's expectations?

PROF. K: Well, I believe that the Yahwist source in these materials is trying to tell us something about God and God's king in his dealing with man in the pre-flood and the post-flood era. The Yahwist uses sources, and of these sources I would have to ultimately say, make the same statement that I did of the Abraham sources, I don't know whether he intends these to be historical.

COMMITTEE: But didn't you tell us before, it's the canonical Word which determines the canonical text rather than the sources?

PROF. K: Absolutely.

COMMITTEE: Well, isn't the canonical text clear?

PROF. K: No. Not if the canonical text is constructed in this way and this is the process that the Spirit has used in its construction.

COMMITTEE: What about it in the sources would lead you to believe that there was no real Adam and Eve and no real fall?

PROF. K: I didn't say that.

COMMITTEE: Or to question whether or not—

PROF. K: I said that I simply have to answer the question on the basis of the canonical and the Yahwist word; I don't know.

COMMITTEE: How about Paul and Romans 5, when he speaks of Adam, or in First Corinthians 11, when he speaks of woman falling first and then man?

PROF. K: He sees Adam as the representative of mankind who got us into this mess—

COMMITTEE: He refers to him as one man.

PROF. K: He sees Christ as the representative of mankind who got us out of this mess. That message is very clear to me in Romans 5. I would again have to say that if you want to get more of a message than that out of Romans 5, you know, assert on the basis of what Paul says that he is talking about a historical human being, that again I don't know; I think I know what his message about God and God's action in response to the event in Adam and the event in Christ is, and that is his message to me.

COMMITTEE: How about First Corinthians 11, where it says that man wasn't deceived, but the woman, and the woman fell first and then man? Does that tell us anything in terms of the fall itself as an event as described in Genesis 3?

PROF. K: Unless Paul is discussing the subject of Adam and

Eve's historicity, which I don't think he is, I don't really think it does tell us anything, or I would have to respond again, I don't know.

Prof. K Transcript

p. 10

COMMITTEE: Just one more question: Would you explain what you meant by historicized credo document?

PROF. K: Well, that—the term—I may have used it, but it doesn't strike me as my terminology—but I would mean that the intent of the document was to make a statement about Yahweh and His Word shaping history rather than that the document has as its intent to recount just what happened. That term just doesn't sound like me in connection with the Succession Narrative, so I don't know precisely.

COMMITTEE: Professor K, you would not agree, then, with these statements, go beyond what you said you're acquainted with, I quote: "Instead of history we have a kind of historical novel"—this is in reference to the Succession Narrative. And from the same author: "The Succession Narrative is a piece of political propaganda justifying Solomon's claim to be the true successor to David in a situation where this claim may well have still been disputed." Now, from what you have been saying, I would understand you to reject this out of hand and quite emphatically?

PROF. K: Well, I don't know. I don't use the term propaganda; I do attempt to point out that the author is writing this to indicate that it is Yahweh's will that Solomon be king, you know, and he's writing it for people in that situation who were questioning whether you ought to have a king at all, and if Solomon rather than a descendant of Saul ought to be king, and the author is—I guess a person could use the term propaganda—he is making propaganda for Solomon, but his propaganda is that Solomon's succession is Yahweh's will.

Prof. M Transcript

pp. 20–21

COMMITTEE: If I understand you right then, the purpose—if you think the purpose can be served without accepting the textual statement or even the New Testament, which says the world which then existed was deluged with water and perished and so on—if you can say that the purpose can be served without accepting that statement, that then you're under no compulsion to accept the text—is that correct?

PROF. M: No, X, my contention is that the text of Old and New Testament is all-important and that our concern must be to understand what it is that the text is saying, what its intention is. See, our traditional, Lutheran approach is that we deal with the *sensus literalis*, but for us Lutherans the *sensus literalis* is the divinely intended sense, and my con-

cern as an exegete must be to determine what that divinely intended sense is, which at times may even be—and I say this deliberately—even be different from the mere surface sense of the words.

COMMITTEE: You mentioned all these different things that the exegete has to go into, seeking the purpose, looking at the background, and everything else, but X's question was: When you've done all this and this is your field, what do you say about the flood?

PROF. M: I use the flood in my preaching to proclaim Jesus Christ because the New Testament brings me back to this again and again, that all of the Old Testament is there to bear witness to Christ and the flood account bears witness to man's sinful rebellion against God, to man's judgment on sin, a judgment which makes me tremble in my boots, but which is then followed by the word of grace, which in the New Testament comes in its culminating form in the clear and beautiful proclamation of Jesus Christ as Son of God and Son of Man, my Lord and my Savior.

COMMITTEE: Now this is wonderful, but in this particular passage, if the world flood, which Scripture says was an event, and if the total destruction, save for Noah's family and that grace—if in effect this really did not take place and that this maybe was a little local flood and they escaped on a raft or something like that, you're saying that this still could be and you've still got the same message of grace. Is this what you're saying?

PROF. M: Well, I'm not saying that that's what the Scriptural state of affairs is, but I'm—

COMMITTEE: I mean, would you allow this, say, if a person took this view?

PROF. M: If you're asking if I would allow it, I think I would say yes, I would. So long as this individual does not negate the divinely intended sense of the passage, which is to teach sin and grace.

COMMITTEE: But is there anything in the text which indicates to you, in the text which indicates to you, that it was not what it claims to be: a world flood?

PROF. M: Well, if we had a good deal more time, I'd say we ought to go through the chapters in Genesis which speak to us of the flood account and which again utilize this approach of divergent parallels and where we—I would say we find evidence from within the Scriptures themselves which suggests that the concern is not for the precise historical sequence of events or a precise description of facts, and to that extent I would say that I could not insist on one version of the flood account which I could say is the only correct version based on Scripture. And here again I'd say I'm resting my case on what the Scriptures themselves say.

5e, 4. The Findings Concerning the Use of the Historical-Critical Method and Its Effect on the Interpretation of Miracles

De Facto Denial of Miracles

All of the Seminary professors stated that they accept the concept of the Biblical miracles as having actually taken place. However, the Fact Finding Committee explored this item in some detail inasmuch as practitioners of the historical-critical method typically tend to set aside the historicity, the "it really happenedness," of miracle accounts.

The committee found that, despite their acceptance of the possibility of miracles, Seminary professors commonly tend to treat the reality of miracles in given texts as exegetical questions. It is considered permissible to treat an account of a miracle as nonliteral and therefore nonhistorical (i. e.: "It never happened"). Professors claimed that "Did Christ walk on water?" was the wrong question to ask the text. It was also asserted that the miracle of Christ walking on water could be treated as an open exegetical question that could be interpreted in several ways, thus in effect eliminating the miraculous element from the narrative. There is a marked reluctance on the

part of some of the men to condemn this downgrading of the miracle accounts as unbiblical. This practice constitutes a serious erosion of Scriptural authority, since it leaves open the possibility that any Scriptural account may be questioned by the device of asserting that the theological lesson, not its factuality or historicity, is the important concern of the text.

In this connection see Appendix IV: *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, Section IV, "I. Historical Method of Biblical Interpretation."

The following transcripts report the findings of the inquiry on this point.

Documentation

Prof. N Transcript

pp. 15-16

COMMITTEE: Some scholars feel that there are some parts of, let's say, the Gospels which are, well, they sometimes call them imaginative additions, to somehow bolster the Messianic image of Christ. Now if such an imaginative addition is allegedly Christ walking on water—now is it permissible for me as a Christian to say, "Well, it's in the Bible, I mean it's—it's written, and therefore, even though it's hard for me to see how that could happen, I'll accept it"? And on the basis, of course, we first come to faith in Christ and so on, and we know his view of Scripture, and we've been convinced by the power of the Word and so on. But when I get to that particular point, the man says, "I want to excise it, I think that's an imaginative addition." I can either do that and say, "Well that's legitimate," or I can say, "It's written," and on that basis accept it. Now, which do you regard, first of all personally—what's your position?

PROF. N: In that particular point of Jesus walking on the water, I accept it as a miracle, and I'm sure it is not necessary that what the miracle has a place in the Holy Scriptures and in Christ's ministry. But here simply I am saying that Christ walking on the water is that miraculous deed which Christ did, and I accept as that.

COMMITTEE: Now would you say, suppose I don't, that I'm a good Lutheran and I still don't accept it because my scholarship leads me to believe that's something that was added to, really didn't happen in the life of Christ?

PROF. N: Well, it would depend on that person's belief in total context of his Christian life and acceptance of authority of Holy Scriptures in his Christian life, but I suppose that he could interpret the walking of Christ on the water in probably, in a little bit different from what I do accept. But simply because of that I would not think that to exclude him from my Christian fellowship with him, but to counsel him to continue to keep in the faith in Christ.

COMMITTEE: Well, really, my question wasn't exclusion from fellowship. My question was whether or not this was a Lutheran thing to do.

PROF. N: I think Lutherans mean many things too and like many other Christian communion, I do think that we, as Lutherans, do not altogether agree Scriptural accounts in same way. I think there are, and Luther himself clearly recognized this and very hermeneutical principle. What he often emphasized was his individual relationship to God and his place of the conscience and I think we Lutherans today too, I think should remain on this and on certain different interpretation of the particular passage certainly does not exclude him from that Lutheran thing. I think he has a legitimate place to be in that Lutheran community.

Prof. O Transcript

pp. 11-12

COMMITTEE: Can we say that Jesus did the miracles attributed to Him in the Gospels in a sense that He interrupted the usual natural processes?

PROF. O: Yes.

COMMITTEE: Did Christ walk on water?

PROF. O: I would see no reason to say He didn't.

COMMITTEE: You would say that He did then?

PROF. O: Yes.

COMMITTEE: Is it acceptable for a Lutheran theologian to deny this?

PROF. O: I would say, now you're asking exegetical questions. Now, personally I'm in the clear. I am not as certain as if a Lutheran theologian, going to the Greek text of the Bible and reading there that, if this is the case, that Jesus was walking *παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν*, and he would understand that to mean "alongside," if he did not do this because he denied the possibility, but he was really convinced that the text said something else, then I would have to allow him that possibility. He's not denying the miraculous.

COMMITTEE: Now, are you saying that the text in this instance is not clear, that there's a question as to what is meant?

PROF. O: I said, I'll say it very clearly. If another interpreter were convinced that the text bore that meaning, then I would allow him the right as an exegete to say that's what the text in his opinion meant, provided he is not saying it because he starts with the assumption that Jesus cannot do miracles. Am I making myself clear?

COMMITTEE: All right, but then I want to pursue this—

COMMITTEE: Yes, I want to too, in this sense: What would determine whether you would permit him this? In other words, are you saying that his stance on the miraculous or the text?

PROF. O: Both. In other words, if I thought, one, that he is not saying this because he says, "I have a supposition that this is impossible; Jesus could not have done it; therefore the text could not mean that." That I would rule out. If he asserts that, yes, it is possible that Jesus could have done it, but as I read this Greek text, I don't think the Greek text says that. Do I make myself clear?

COMMITTEE: But how would you determine—you see, this is a very clear statement as far as I know; there is no—the exegesis seems rather straightforward. Or if you don't want to take this one, take the raising of Lazarus.

PROF. O: I see no difficulty with the raising of Lazarus.

COMMITTEE: Now suppose I were to tell you, though, that I would come along with some approach to the text in which I would say that I am convinced that this is a text clearly says this, I don't think there's any possibility with the text of changing it to say that it meant something else. The words are clear. But suppose I say that I believe these words are a legend that was placed in there by either the writer or a redactor later to build up the concept of Christ as the Messiah and on that basis I would not accept the account of the raising of Lazarus. Would you permit me this?

PROF. O: I would say, "You're wrong." I don't know if it's a question of permitting.

COMMITTEE: Would you say that I can say this as a Lutheran theologian?

PROF. O: I would say that you should not.

COMMITTEE: But you would still allow me the possibility of saying—

PROF. O: You are using words, "can," "understand to be," "is it," "can he say." Obviously he can say it. He does.

COMMITTEE: Yes. What I mean, and I'm glad you came back

with this because we want to understand each other very clearly. What I'm saying is, can I legitimately say this as one who is pledged to accept the Word as *norma normans*? In other words, can I take a case where there is a very clear statement, where there is no exegetical problem (yes) but where I may on the basis of some source theory or redaction theory, perhaps draw the conclusion that this is something which is added by the community later, that this was not in fact something which happened, it is a legend, it is added. Now, suppose I take that position, can I legitimately do this as a person who said I am pledged to the Scriptures and to the *sola Scriptura*?

PROF. O: I guess I would ask, "What does this do to the Gospel, to this man? What does it do to the proclamation of the Good News? Does it undercut the *extra nos* character of my salvation? Have you made it impossible to proclaim that Jesus Christ is the Lord, by His life, death, and resurrection?" And if he has, obviously, impossible to say that as a good Lutheran theologian.

COMMITTEE: Do you make the Gospel then determinative rather than the Scripture? Are you in danger of switching formal and material principles?

PROF. O: That's a good question. I would answer that, X, by saying, "No, I don't want to set Scripture and Gospel against each other, I don't want to do that." I am committed *qua* Lutheran to, by the Confessions, to the fact that the central affirmation of the Scriptures is the Gospel, and therefore as a Lutheran, the final, the ultimate step, the touchstone of anything is the Gospel. This would certainly be the way in which Luther himself worked, say, in evaluating the Book of Hebrews.

Prof. G Transcript

pp. 27-28

COMMITTEE: Let me sharpen it up. Suppose somebody says on the basis of a form criticism that he thinks that, well, take any story you want, but let's say Christ walking on water. Say I don't think He walked on water really; this is something that was written in by the church in order to show that He is really God, and what better way to do it to show that He is a God of nature. And that is really what that means: He is a God of nature, and we are quite sure that, although the text is clear and says He walked on water, that really that is something that is written in and not historical, didn't happen. Now is this not a violation of this control here, the authoritative word is canonical?

PROF. G: Let me first of all affirm that the walking on water presents no problem to me whatever and that I wouldn't take this particular route. Now let me try to defend the guy who may go that route whoever he may be. If I were to find in the literature of that period this kind of story told once or twice or three times, then I in full honesty would have no choice but to ask myself, May this have been a literary device used for a certain purpose? This is not the final answer.

COMMITTEE: Applying that to the virgin birth, I am told—and I am not a scholar in that area—that there are parallels, Egyptians and Greeks, the virgin birth. Well, applying that to the story of the virgin birth, would you then question whether or not that is to be accepted as historical?

PROF. G: I would question that and then would affirm it, but that is where the problem arises. Vergil, as you know, in his Eighth Epilogue something about the divine savior Augustus virgin-born. So (cough) classic example where in non-Christian literature the literary device "virgin born" is a way of affirming the unique power and heroism of Augustus. Julius Caesar claimed to be son of Venus, I think, built a temple to her somewhere along the line. At any rate they are all doing this. Then in all historical honesty I need to ask myself the question: Is it possible that a Jewish rabbi has picked up this motif and built it into the Gospel? As I wrestle with this question, I am tremendously helped by the ancient tradition of the church, which has always said we have found it desirable, wise, necessary to affirm the virgin birth. I don't know what logical principle that I could use to prove the virgin birth beyond debate. At some point in some way I have to fall back on my faith, my belief.

Prof. P Transcript

pp. 8-10

COMMITTEE: In your opinion is there any miracle in the New

Testament which on the basis we have been talking can legitimately be excised from the canon? You know the New Testament like the back of your hand, so this is a fair question.

PROF. P: Sure it is a fair question. We can't excise anything from the canon. The canon is a given, if I understood your question.

COMMITTEE: Let me rephrase it then. Is there any of these miracles concerning which one in your opinion may draw the conclusion that this in effect does not represent something that Christ did but it is something which is said concerning Him as some kind of an interpretation or imaginative addition or whatever you want to call it? Do any of the miracles in the New Testament qualify?

PROF. P: Many of them qualify in the minds of many scholars. If you are asking what I believe, here on the spot, there is not one of the miracles which I would want to affirm was not within the power of my Lord and that the community in remembering and recording it has recorded something that didn't happen. I can't think of any.

COMMITTEE: If you had a student who felt that he had reached a conclusion that he had here a miracle which in fact qualified for that, what would be your, oh, say, pedagogical approach to it, what would you indicate to him as his mentor? Would you be apt to agree with him then if he felt that way that this was O.K., if he felt his scholarship had led him to this, that you might not agree with the scholarship but you would say, "Well, this is your right to do this"?

PROF. P: No, I can't recall that it has ever happened that a student in a paper has taken a miracle text and has reached any kind of very radical conclusion. If it should happen, talking in hypothetical cases, in any case, if I have a concern over something that a student is producing, I talk to the student, I would want to know what is going on. In the case of a miracle story which hypothetically his scholarship might lead him to see as an interpretative pericope, I would be very much interested in knowing what he thinks he is learning about the Christ in that pericope and if he is motivated by some of the reductionist presuppositions. I would want to find that out; it would be a concern; I would want to talk to him about it.

COMMITTEE: Now suppose he is not operating with an anti-supernaturalism, but he feels he has done his homework, and he finds a number, as you indicated, of New Testament scholars of repute who think of a particular pericope that this conclusion may be drawn, and if you have established that that is really his basis, would you say, "O.K., this is all right"? Or would you say it is recorded in the canon here as something which took place and therefore we have to accept it that way? I am getting back to my "excision" again.

PROF. P: In no case would that student, I think, be excising that pericope. That would not be his intention.

COMMITTEE: What you are saying is how he interprets it, as to whether or not in fact it is historical or whether or not it isn't.

PROF. P: Yes?

COMMITTEE: O.K. Well, if he says I think, for instance, Christ walking on water, that these led to the conclusions that really this is saying something spiritual and his scholarly reading and so forth and his thinking, his analysis, leads him to the fact that this really isn't necessary for this to have happened for the Gospel, although it says something about the greatness of Christ, it is sort of perhaps a parabolic way of talking about that He is Creator and so on, but he says, "I think I will preach to the people in this particular sermon that Christ indeed is Creator and so on, but whether or not He walked on water we don't really know"—what would you do with that? Huh?

PROF. P: I don't know. It is just so interesting how good a sermon you can preach on these pericopes when you try to caricature them. I don't think that student would want to preach that Christ walked on the water, *punctum*. None of us would want to. If his study of that pericope led him to an exaltation of his Lord, I might say, "Well, maybe you will study that text another time and reach different conclusions; but you do have a grasp on your Lord, and this

text has helped you." I don't think I would be terribly concerned.

Prof. Q Transcript

pp. 17-18

COMMITTEE: That's why I'm asking you the question, sir. Do you yourself believe that in the Gospels, or in the New Testament in general or in the Old Testament too if you please, that there are imaginative enlargements? Do you believe this or do you not?

PROF. Q: I think for example in the book of Revelation you have many, many cases of imaginative expression. "144 thousand." This is the trouble with a good many witnesses. They go off on a tack, you see, naturally, well let's take, but this is underestimate —

COMMITTEE: Well, let's take two examples you give.

PROF. Q: Fine.

COMMITTEE: Peter's walking on water, the coin in the fish's mouth.

PROF. Q: Well, let's say this, that if you had a camera on the occasion I'm sure that you would have broken it.

COMMITTEE: Would you please state directly what you mean by that?

PROF. Q: What I mean is that there are questions that are improper for us to ask in some ways. The facts of history as they come to us, as was pointed out before, along with their interpretation, I as an interpreter of any text, especially of the texts of Sacred Scripture, have to take the stance of one who recognizes that all the standards and criteria of the cosmos, and that includes also my scholarly standards, that they will have to recognize their limitations, that there are many phenomena—I'm using that word loosely now—of God that are not completely susceptible to our understanding. That's what St. Paul says: "We see as in a glass darkly." The early church pondered many of the things that Jesus said and did, but they had the assurance that the Lord was guiding them; this is a great comfort to us. In other words, if they didn't grasp something fully at the time when they were with the Lord, and we know they didn't, because otherwise the apostle Peter would not be criticized so much in the Gospel, and repeatedly notice that

the Gospels affirm to us that the disciples understood none of these things, and now, the Good News comes to us as Good News, not as good data first of all, and you yourself know, not you, but one of your own poets has said this, that, for example, in Genesis the horticultural observations or the biological observations are not those that would be subscribed to by a taxonomically oriented researcher, that's a quotation out of the *Biblical Research Annual*. Well, I think that the same kind of caution, the same kind of reticence, the same kind of scholarly sobriety should characterize our concern in investigating the truth.

COMMITTEE: Now with that background, would you please indulge me and answer my question? Do you believe that there are imaginative enlargements in the Gospels?

PROF. Q: Well, show me where there are some, and then I will analyze them. I can't just answer a question that I—I have to see a text.

COMMITTEE: Well, Peter's walking on the water. That's a very familiar text. Or Christ walking on water; it's the same thing.

PROF. Q: You always tell me, however, that the time is running out. I have to look at the context now on this score.

COMMITTEE: Please do.

PROF. Q: All right, which —

COMMITTEE: I'm very happy you didn't bring your Hebrew Bible along.

PROF. Q: Personally, I don't have any problem with the story.

COMMITTEE: You think it did not happen?

PROF. Q: I said I didn't have any problem with the story, and then you said it didn't happen. Now that's your problem, not mine. Do you say it didn't happen?

COMMITTEE: No. I don't think you've answered the question, whether you think that story happened or not.

PROF. Q: It isn't important whether I think it happened, but the thing is it's important that I understood what the Lord was doing when He was walking on the water and what the text is saying that He was trying to tell me through that event.

5e, 5. The Findings Concerning the Use of the Historical-Critical Method and the Authenticity of the Words of Jesus as Reported in the Four Gospels

The Words of Jesus

Many practitioners of the historical-critical method throughout the world question the reliability of the New Testament accounts of Jesus' deeds and sayings. They are of the opinion that the Gospels bring us "interpretations" by the early church of the life of Jesus. What they mean is that the early church added to the stories as it interpreted what Jesus said and did to fit its own specific circumstances.

Some advocates of the historical-critical method go so far as to dismiss all of the historic elements in the Gospel accounts with the single exception of the fact that Jesus lived and that He died on the cross. The accounts found in the four Gospels are attributed to the Christian community and the insights it had into Jesus' ministry after He had departed. Very few of Jesus' words as found in the four Gospels are considered to be authentic.

Because of this situation the Fact Finding Committee probed the professors regarding their own opinion of the authenticity of the words of Jesus as found in the four Gospels.

The professors recognized that the committee was not asking if the four Gospels record Jesus' words with the precision of a tape recorder. The question was if the words in their basic substance were indeed words that Jesus spoke. The professors did not deny the authenticity of Jesus' words in any

particular case. However, in harmony with the historical-critical approach some considered it legitimate for an interpreter to conclude for scholarly reasons that Jesus did not do or say the things attributed to Him. The basic restriction was that one may not deny who Jesus is or that He could have said or done these things. Redaction criticism is followed to the extent that speeches in the New Testament may be said to have been edited by the New Testament authors so as to become vehicles for their own theology.

This principle introduces uncertainty into the entire New Testament text. If this approach is followed, then one does not know whether the words attributed to the apostles and even to Jesus were fabricated by others at a later time. The attribution to Jesus of words He never said involves putting into Jesus' mouth what the church wanted Him to say. Thus Jesus becomes the vehicle for promoting the theology of the early church, rather than the norm and source of that theology. The sacraments of the church can no longer be held to rest upon Jesus' own institution, for no one can any longer be sure that He spoke the words attributed to Him. In this way the reliability of the Scriptures and of the Gospel itself is attacked directly.

Cf. Appendix IV: *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, IV, F, 7-8.

See the following transcripts and exhibits for documentation of this point.

Documentation

Prof. I Transcript

p. 15

COMMITTEE: But my question was, if a person on your faculty takes that position, if scholarship leads him to that, for the text says Jesus said this, with no problem with the synoptics, etc., clearly reports it as having said that, and he says no on the basis of whatever presuppositions he does, but he says against the text, you see, the text says this, and we say the Scripture is *norma normans*, but he says, "I don't accept what the text says." Would you tolerate that as being either Biblical or confessional? And I think you probably ought to be able to answer that with a yes or no answer.

PROF. I: Well, there are very few questions you can answer on a yes-or-no basis. Very few.

COMMITTEE: Well, we won't debate that now. We may debate that outside. Would you please answer?

PROF. I: Ya, I would be glad to answer. I would want to determine what the reasons that he gives, what these reasons are, why he comes to the conclusion that he comes to. If his reasons are that Jesus could not possibly have done this, obviously he has a foreshortened or a shrunken view about who Jesus is. That would be serious.

Prof. O Transcript

pp. 9-11

COMMITTEE: Do you believe that the words which are claimed by the Gospels to be spoken by Jesus were actually spoken, at least in content? This was conceding that they were translated from Aramaic into Greek by the writers.

PROF. O: Substantially, yes.

COMMITTEE: Would you define what you mean by substantially?

PROF. O: All right. The writers of the New Testament books nowhere betray primarily an interest in recording for the sake of recording. The church called these documents Gospels, and Gospel is a word for proclamation. That is, the words are recorded because they are useful for the churches to which they are addressed, that is, to which the Gospels are addressed, for which they are written. That means that at times one finds the very same saying of Jesus in a slightly different form in a different Gospel, because it is directed to a different end; and that I would regard as not—I forget what X's word was before [fruitless and irreverent]—not fruitless or irreverent, but this is precisely the application of Jesus' teaching to the needs of the church by the prophetic and apostolic men.

COMMITTEE: All right, now—

PROF. O: That's what I mean about substantial.

COMMITTEE: Thank you. That's clear. Now, by way of contrast, is it possible for a Lutheran theologian to say instead of this that they are substantially the words of Jesus, to say that what you have in the Gospels are words attributed to Jesus through the Christian congregation, Christian community, years and generations later, and that they are words which Jesus very likely never really said? Is this a live option for a Lutheran theologian?

PROF. O: You used the word possible. It's obviously possible because Lutheran theologians have said it.

COMMITTEE: Well, let's say, is it contrary to Scripture, contrary to Lutheran theology to take this position?

PROF. O: Not necessarily. That is a question which can be answered either yes or no, depending on the way in which you surround the answer. St. Paul quotes Jesus three times in his letters. Each time he does it he quotes Him as *ὁ κύριος*. St. Paul apparently was convinced that Jesus did not stop speaking at the Ascension. I take that to be the sense, for example, of his word in 1 Thess. 4: "This we say to you in a word of the Lord." I would see that the church therefore uses the words of Jesus in much the same way that it uses the Old Testament, uses them to apply them to a new situation. I do not think therefore that anyone in the early church would say, "We are creating words of Jesus." And in that sense, no, they are not putting words in His mouth.

COMMITTEE: Now Paul is, in the reference you gave, says that he's confident of the words of Jesus, is not attributing this to something which He said at the—allegedly said during His lifetime ministry, as the Gospels do, and this is what my question is with reference to. Put it this way: Is it possible that Jesus really did not say what the Gospels attribute to Him? Now this is substantially. For example, are the words the product of the creative ability of the writers?

PROF. O: No.

COMMITTEE: They're not. Now I actually asked you two questions. I guess in both cases you'd say no then. The first, just to repeat it. Is it possible that Jesus really did not say what's attributed to Him by the Gospels, that is, substantially?

PROF. O: If I understand the question, I guess I would answer no, but—

COMMITTEE: This really goes right with it, by way of explaining the first question. For example, are the words, as some allege, the words attributed to Jesus, really the product of the creative ability of the writers or the editors, the redactors?

PROF. O: That one, no.

COMMITTEE: Another one. Form criticism holds that a story grew up about the sayings of Jesus, in other words, a story which serves as a framework for the saying, so that the saying can be told, and if this happened after His death, in other words, if the story really is a story made up, created, to fit the saying in a different context, do you find this to be acceptable?

PROF. O: Not put in that bald form. No.

Prof. XX

Jesus and the New Age According to St. Luke, Clayton Publishing House, 61 Ridgemoor Drive, St. Louis, Missouri

XX argues that it is impossible to determine the words of Jesus spoken on any given occasion. He asserts that as Christians pondered on Jesus and His meaning for their time, new sayings of Jesus could be produced, presumably by the community. He includes this type of activity under the umbrella of inspiration. Cf. pp. xviii-xix of his book.

XX applies this idea to Jesus' prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. On page 212 he claims that the destruction of Jerusalem had already occurred when Luke wrote his Gospel. XX speaks of Luke adding more explicit

terms to Jesus' prediction, especially referring to the encirclement by the Roman armies. It is thus evident that XX does not attribute to Christ the details of the prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem. These were "dubbed in" later, after the event.

Prof. XX

Concordia Commentary: Acts
St. Louis: CPH, 1970, p. 22

In the introduction of this commentary XX says: "It is impossible to prove that the speeches [in Acts] are merely free creations of the evangelist. Indeed the speeches are remarkable for ideas and nuances appropriate to everything we know of the situation and the speakers (see the commentary on the individual addresses). Luke is himself close enough to the events, to people who were present or to reliable sources, to offer the gist of what was said on various occasions. Nevertheless, the vocabulary and style and themes of the various speeches have far more in common with one another and with the totality of Luke-Acts than with any other sections of the New Testament. The simplest explanation is that Luke had carefully edited his sources and used the speeches as a vehicle for his theology."

5e, 6. The Findings Concerning the Use of the Historical-Critical Method and the Interpretation of Messianic Prophecy, or: Messianic Prophecy and the Unity of the Old and New Testaments

The Lutheran confessors believed that the New Testament interpreted the Old (*Apology*, XXIV, 36, 37). They likewise taught that the believers in the Old Testament days were saved by a faith in a Messiah who was to come.

Several seminary exegetes state that the Old Testament is interpreted by the New in such a way that the fullness of God's grace is revealed in the New. But they believe that the Old Testament must be interpreted apart from what the New Testament says about it. This means that the New Testament identification of Old Testament passages as pointing to Jesus Christ is not held to determine the meaning of the Old Testament passages.

Likewise several of the men teach that the Old Testament patriarchs believed in the grace of God, but that grace was the general goodness of God and the promise was of earthly prosperity and general spiritual welfare rather than of a specific Messiah to come.

According to the Old Testament exegetes, the so-called Messianic prophecies in most cases had to do with immediate applications involving the royal house of David. Only in a derived sense are these prophecies later applied to Christ, the greatest Son of David. In several instances professors denied the existence of prophecies pointing directly to Christ.

In general, the exegetes follow the current trend of Old Testament scholarship, which does not hold that the Old Testament believer understood anything about a coming Redeemer. This reluctance to accept direct prophetic references to Christ is also in harmony with the anti-supernaturalistic bias of the historical-critical method.

However, the professors do not deny the *theoretical possibility* of predictive prophecy.

The professors realize that their approach to Messianic prophecy is not in harmony with the way in which the Lutheran confessors approached the Old Testament. However, they counter with the argument that they are not bound to the exegesis of the Confessions. While it is true that our church has maintained that it is unnecessary to agree with every exegetical detail or line of argumentation in the Confessions, the church must determine whether this principle can legitimately be extended to the point where such a major confessional approach to the Old Testament can be set aside without seriously modifying our church's understanding of the significance of confessional subscription.

In evaluating the position of the St. Louis faculty it is important to note how the Lutheran Confessions treat the topic of Messianic prophecy and the faith of the Old Testament believers.

The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, IV, 83: "In Acts 10:43, Peter says, 'To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.' How could he say it any more plainly? We receive the forgiveness of sins, he says, through his name, that is, for his sake: therefore, not for the sake of our merits, our contrition, attrition, love, worship, or works. And he adds, 'when we believe in him.' Thus he requires faith. We cannot take hold of the name of Christ except by faith. In addition, he cites the consensus of all the prophets, which is really citing the authority of the church."

Apology, IV, 5: "All Scripture should be divided into these two chief doctrines, the law and the promises. In some places it presents the law. In others it presents the promise of Christ; this it does either when it *promises that the Messiah will come* and promises forgiveness of sins, justification, and eternal life for his sake, or when, in the New Testament, the Christ who came promises forgiveness of sins, justification, and eternal life." (Italics added)

Apology, IV, 57: "This service and worship is especially praised throughout the prophets and the Psalms. Even though the law does not teach the free forgiveness of sins, the patriarchs knew the promise of the Christ, that for his sake God intended to forgive sins. As they understood that the Christ would be the price for our sins, they knew that our works could not pay so high a price. Therefore they received free mercy and the forgiveness of sins by faith, just as the saints in the New Testament."

Apology, XXIV, 55: "In the Old Testament as in the New, the saints had to be justified by faith in the promise of the forgiveness of sins given for Christ's sake. Since the beginning of the world, all the saints have had to believe that Christ would be the offering and the satisfaction for sin, as Isa. 53:10 teaches, 'When he makes himself an offering for sin.'"

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, V, 23: "Since the beginning of the world these two proclamations have continually been set forth side by side in the church of God with the proper distinction. The descendants of the holy patriarchs, like the patriarchs themselves, constantly reminded themselves not only how man in the beginning was created righteous and holy by God and through the deceit of the serpent transgressed God's laws, became a sinner, corrupted himself and all his descendants, and plunged them into death and eternal damnation, but also revived their courage and comforted themselves with the proclamation of the woman's seed, who would bruise the serpent's head; likewise, of the seed of Abraham, by whom all nations should be blessed; likewise, of David's son, who should restore the kingdom of Israel and be a light to the nations, 'who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities and with whose stripes we are healed.'"

In this connection cf. again Appendix IV: *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, IV, "H. Old Testament Prophecy," and "VI. Confessional Subscription."

For illustrations of the professors' approach to prophecy see the following transcripts. Note that there is some variation in their stance. If the Lutheran Confessions are to determine what is truly Lutheran, how are we to regard the professors' view of prophecy?

Documentation

Prof. D Transcript

pp. 29-31

COMMITTEE: Now when Christ in Matthew 22 quotes the first verse of Psalm 110 and says, "How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls Him Lord? . . . If David calls Him Lord, how is He his son?" Would it be correct to say that Christ is there telling us that David did indeed, by using the term Lord to apply to his progeny, have an understanding that this was to be more than simply a great king who was to succeed him, but in terms of calling Him Lord even though He is a descendant, that there is a clear indication here that the Spirit had given David an understanding that this was to be in fact the Messiah and the fact that the Lord concept is it to be One superior and One that would imply God Himself?

PROF. D: Well, first of all to this thing that the Septuagint is quoted. In the New Testament the text quotes the same

word, κύριος. In the Hebrew there is a distinctive difference between the two. It is Yahweh neum, which means an oracle. It is an oracle of Yahweh which speaks to Adonai. Now Adonai is a term that can clearly refer to the king. Now Yahweh couldn't, because that is the name of God. But Adonai is a word that is a general word for lord, and so it is important that you recognize that there is truly a distinction between the two, in the original. And Jesus is aware of that and is playing upon that in order to catch the Pharisees. And the whole point of that pericope, as I recall, is that He wants to get the Pharisees tricked. And He doesn't answer it, and they don't answer it. So that is an unanswered question as to what the text means. If you go back to what the text is saying, it is pretty clear to me that God is speaking an oracle to the lord through, in this case, the king David. And the promise is that this king will have authority and a future and a dimension that really indicates

that he is after the order of Melchizedek, he is a priest-king. And the whole package implies, of course, the whole raft of Messianic hopes that are connected with the promise to the king and his future. David and the lord are never just the historical king. And that is what the whole Messianic package is about, that the hopes connected with the promises to David and to his seed have a future, have a promise, have a dimension, have an ideal in fact that is only fulfilled ultimately in Jesus Christ. And yet there is the historical connection as this is spoken in its original context in connection with David or the Davidic king.

COMMITTEE: So you are saying then that you believe that Adonai, "my Lord," there is a term for a Davidic king and not a direct reference to Christ?

PROF. D: Not a direct reference to Christ, but in the sense that this is a text that has the promise of the Messianic hope associated with it, it is truly part of that package which looks to the future. Now it is very important that we don't make a statement that there is a kind of rectilinear connection between one text here and a New Testament situation as though here this is not a statement to the king but is some kind of soothsayer diviner who gives you a wonderful (one) word out of the distant future. You are talking about historical situation, and the message must be relevant to that time as well as being relevant to the ultimate plan of God. And in that sense it is fulfilled in the New Testament.

COMMITTEE: Are there any passages in the Old Testament in your opinion—you use the word rectilinear or direct, and you also referred to it as soothsayer type, but with reference to it—leaps across the centuries, is it as no direct reference to the immediate situation in which the word, prophetic word was spoken but that it refers directly to the Christ who is to come? Do you know of any of those or recognize any of those in the Old Testament?

PROF. D: I would like to rephrase that question, in order to make clear what I understand to be the truth. I look at the Old Testament promises whether they are to David or to Moses or to whoever happens to be. Those promises have to be meaningful to the situation and the time, but the promises are not somehow or other limited. They are part of the stream of both. They are part of the plan of God, and they move ahead, and ultimately God is in the midst of that hope and that promise, and God fulfills that promise as He fulfills His plan. And if you suddenly just say, "All right, somebody divined something one day" (like you know), or, "I'll look at my crystal ball, and I'm going to look at 2500 years from now, and *Punk!* there is going to be something happening." That is not the Biblical understanding of prophecy. That is divination. And I am very concerned that we insist upon the process and the understanding of fulfillment that the Biblical tradition talks about, and this beautiful discussion about *πληρόω* that is in this hermeneutics of the CTCR (I am sure it is in here; it is in one of the CTCR documents anyway. No, it is in here!) gives you the whole point of trying to understand the thing in some kind of fullness, not some kind of limited way of understanding the process of how God plans the future.

COMMITTEE: So if I correctly understand you, then you do not know of any place in the Old Testament, including Micah 5 with reference to Bethlehem and so on, which is a prophecy that has reference to the Messiah but does not have reference also to some immediate situation. Is that correct understanding?

PROF. D: Yes, you must first relate it to its immediate situation and see how the hope of that Messianic figure has meaning to the people in the days of Micah 5. And clearly you have to be talking to your audience. You are not talking to the air in some distant moment. You are talking to the needs of your audience at a certain time. That is the basic Lutheran principle. And in talking to the historical situation the deeper dimension of the truth and the power of the promise leaps beyond that moment to the future, and in the future the word is fulfilled.

Prof. K Transcript

pp. 14-17

COMMITTEE: I wonder if I can attach another question to this. You would say what you have said in spite of the fact that Jesus emphasizes to His contemporaries that God is not

a God of the dead; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they are living now. You would still say what you said? That there is a possibility, that, because I realize that Jesus said this in the days of His humiliation. Well, I'd like to go one step farther. In trying to reconstruct the Emmaus story, and I can paraphrase it a little bit: When Jesus meets the two disciples, He tells them, "What stupid theologians you are that it took you so long and you haven't reached it yet, that you understand that these things had to happen which the prophets said of Me." Would you on the basis—and don't forget that statement was made in the days of his exaltation when His kenosis was complete, and we can take it for granted that in these days of His exaltation He was again possessed of all of the divine majesty, which includes knowledge, also knowledge of what happened in the Old Testament—would you say on the basis of the Emmaus story, "We can point to the Old Testament and say, Jesus says to us, Look for the predictive messages of the Old Testament"? Do you, or would you tell your students, Prof. K, that there are passages in the Old Testament, just as Jesus said to the Emmaus disciples, "which are definitely predictive to Me"? I use a different term to my confirmation kids, and that's Messianic.

PROF. K: There are passages that are predictive of the Christ. Jesus claims to be, and I honestly believe He is—the New Testament writers assert that Jesus of Nazareth is—the Christ. And He is saying, "You need to see in the Old Testament the predictive passages about the Christ, whom nobody knew in the Old Testament, who it was, and you need to apply those passages, all of them, to Me."

COMMITTEE: It seems to me, Prof. K, that not all, but many of the students who come out of the Hebrew classes today at the Sem, have an altogether different interpretation of the term Messianic passages than I would buy. Is it your contention that only in those passages where the New Testament says, "Here is where David is speaking about the Christ," that those you would classify as Messianic? Or don't you use the term Messianic at all?

PROF. K: Oh, yes, yes.

COMMITTEE: In what sense? That they are an anointed one, a royal one, like the Second Psalm, the *Mesheko*?

PROF. K: In that sense, yes.

COMMITTEE: His Messiah, His Anointed One.

PROF. K: And then in the sense that after the historical national demise of the Davidic dynasty, the affirmations that there will come a future figure described in various ways, who is described as Son of David, a representative of the Davidic dynasty. He will come to perform certain functions for the people of God. Those are, as I see it, Messianic passages, and the development of Messianism as I see is the anointed, that is king, Judean king, Davidic dynasty, and then the passages, when this dynasty no longer exists, about the coming one from that dynasty who will perform certain functions for the people of God, of peace, of security, of welfare, of spreading the religion of Yahweh, the religion of God throughout the nation.

COMMITTEE: So I take it you present, for instance, Psalm 2 as a royal psalm?

PROF. K: Yes, sir.

COMMITTEE: But you also add the predictive element in it, is that right? That you would say now, this psalm really pointed forward as an arrow to a time when there would be a greater one from the house of David.

PROF. K: I see it as having two uses in the history of Israel, this one psalm. In its first use it asserts something about the son of David and his adoption, that is, his coronation, when they regarded the son of David who came to be king as adopted by God. I see it as having a use when that kind of historical use didn't make any sense anymore, that people used it to talk about the coming representative of the Davidic dynasty who would do the things that the prophets described. These are the two uses that I see of the psalm, as a royal psalm.

COMMITTEE: In that connection, how do you exegete Matthew 22:41 and following: "While the Pharisees"—let's see if I can find it—"While the Pharisees were gathered together,

JESUS asked them a question, saying, 'What do you think of the Christ? Whose Son is He?' They said to Him, 'The Son of David.' He said to them, 'How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls Him Lord, saying "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand till I put Thy enemies under Thy feet." If David thus calls Him Lord, how is He his Son?' How would you exegete that passage?

PROF. K: Well, in my teaching at the seminary I don't recall that I have. In the parish, as I have exegeted it, I have asserted that our Lord is making the claim with the Pharisees that He is the Messiah, and that, I guess, is about the—

COMMITTEE: Well now what our Lord is saying is that David, one, was inspired by the Spirit and thus attributes to Psalm 110 David authorship; secondly, He says that David calls Him Lord, saying, "The Lord said to my Lord, sit at My right hand till I put Thy enemies under Thy feet. If David thus calls Him Lord, how is He his Son?" Now, is not our Lord actually saying that David then prophesied of the One who is to come, who is his son, but still is also his Lord, and the problem as I understand it is that a king would never call a descendant his lord, because the older one would be the lord, would be the greater.

PROF. K: I quite agree with what you say about it, the statement about David and His inspiration. There are a good many things about the passage I simply do not understand. What I think I do understand is that our Lord is making a claim with the Pharisees. I don't believe He's denying being David's son—

COMMITTEE: But is He not saying that David wrote of Him ahead of time, prophesied?

PROF. K: Yes, He is saying, "I am Lord, and you should be able to find in your Scripture this kind of affirmation about Me."

COMMITTEE: Would you call that a rectilinear prophecy, then? The term has been claimed by someone; I'm not sure I necessarily like it. Would you identify this as one?

PROF. K: I don't use the term rectilinear prophecy. I do regard Psalm 110 as a royal psalm with the uses that I have ascribed before.

COMMITTEE: In their day, then (do I understand you correctly?) in their day it would have had relevance and reference only to someone who is to follow in the dynasty, some king, some royal person who is to come, and actually for them no relevance beyond that. And it's only later, when the New Testament comes, that that's read back into it. Is that correct?

PROF. K: Well, if you make the same distinction in their day that I have made, I wouldn't see it coming through like that. When there was a Davidic dynasty, it seems to me that Psalm 110 is saying this representative has both royal and priestly prerogatives. Some kind of an assertion along that line about the dynasty. In the period when this dynasty wasn't ruling, people affirmed and understood this passage to mean that the coming future figure would be both king and priest. This was the understanding of Psalm 110, as I can see it.

COMMITTEE: Do you know of any passage in the Old Testament which you could say would apply only to Christ, that no immediate fulfillment or even promise relative to some royal king, some (cough) who is to follow? In other words, do you know of any passage like that at all that you'd so identify?

PROF. K: That refers to the Christ, the Messiah?

COMMITTEE: Yes, Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, Son of David.

PROF. K: Not Jesus of Nazareth, because no one knew who the Christ was going to be until Jesus of Nazareth came along; they just didn't.

COMMITTEE: All right.

PROF. K: Passages that refer to the Christ, yes, Isaiah 11, Micah 5.

COMMITTEE: How about Isaiah 53?

PROF. K: I do not see that as referring to the Christ in its first emphasis and meaning. In the Targum of Isaiah 53, the

suffering aspects are left out, and it is referred to the royal messiah. So Isaiah 53 had a Messianic reference before the time of Jesus of Nazareth. But I would answer in the negative if I understand your question as to this—

COMMITTEE: Would you say the Targum was then definitive for explaining Isaiah 53?

PROF. K: No, I think that the thing that is definitive for understanding its use in the New Testament is the ministry of our Lord and His affirmation about Himself as Suffering Servant. But I think that the Targum usage that connected it with the Messiah contributed to the understanding of people at the time of our Lord as He made this kind of affirmation.

Prof. A Transcript

pp. 6-7

PROF. A: I believe that the words were used for example in Psalm 2. I think that this was a psalm used at the coronation of many kings over and over again, and thus are not in their original and primary (who is to say in the long run?) *sub specie aeternitatis*, whether this is in God's mind not the primary function ultimately, but at least the one that they were aware of then, they were using this in the—at the coronation of the king to indicate the fact that Jahveh had chosen this man and that he was—he had the promises of Jahveh of the Davidic dynasty. However, God's promises are always open-ended, and one never knows how fully and how—can never predict accurately, humanly speaking, how He is going to fulfill them even more gloriously than you could expect. And I find this, that the promise, that the fulfillment that God brings about is usually greater than and breaks through even the promise.

COMMITTEE: Let's say I grant the statement that every one of those predictive passages referred to a local situation, when then that predictive passage is referred to the Messiah, would you grant me permission to label that psalm Messianic then? See, in my mind Psalm 2 is . . . Psalm 110

PROF. A: I would say, I would give you permission. Well, sir, if you are convinced that that is Messianically predictive, then I would say, "Fine, go ahead." I, on these matters, on interpretive matters which certainly don't affect directly any article of faith, I say absolutely go ahead, and I change my mind sometimes, and I, you saw me doing it here, this is a principle that I hold to steadfastly, and I will present a point in class and say this is my view, these are the reasons why I have it, I recognize these problems, I would try to answer them in this respect, I think this is the best and fullest answer. If you don't buy this, if you buy another one, fine. Now let's listen to what the message is too. But I think my best technique is to try to understand the original situation in which it is spoken because I believe that God is there speaking a word to those men, and to the extent that He gives us the wisdom to put on the shoes of those men to whom God's prophet is originally speaking we will better hear the word He intends to speak there. So that the message of gracious victory here, the message that God is going to set things right that is here, is—He fulfills in Jesus Christ, absolutely, who is the great Son of David and who is the One of whom these words can be said in their highest sense, and I feel that it is correct to say that this is a—He is a fulfillment of this.

Prof. A Transcript

p. 24

COMMITTEE: What about a statement like Acts 1:16? "Brethren, the scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David, concerning Judas, who was guide to those who arrested Jesus." And that's of course a quote from Psalm 41:9: "Even my bosom friend in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread," and so on. Now just incidentally, he's referring to this the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David; would you say that definitively labeled Psalm 41 as a Davidic psalm?

PROF. A: No sir, I, frankly, I would not. I think this is a common way of speaking of all the psalms that they are of David or of any psalm is of David. As I understand the text here, and as I understand the usage among Jews.

Prof. S Transcript

pp. 21-23

COMMITTEE: The Messianic prophecies, would you regard them as a part of the doctrinal system of the symbols,

whether ex professo or incidental? Do you have anyone who has difficulty with the Confessions because of the Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament?

PROF. S: Sometimes identification in Confessions might be taken a little differently but not with the idea that the Scriptures do not speak of the Messiah.

COMMITTEE: What is the little difference?

PROF. S: Well, I mean, like whether the Bible passage, a specific Bible passage, which is cited in the Confessions, whether that specifically talks about the Messiah. Not that there are passages; this would go into a specific area.

COMMITTEE: Just to pursue that a little farther like in the Formula, under Law and Gospel (pause). . . . Where they mention the seed and so forth and quote Genesis. They apply this a couple of places in the Apology too. Repentance, you know, they apply Genesis 3:15 very definitely as Messianic.

PROF. S: There may be some who feel that from the New Testament viewpoint that there is no doubt about it, or whether the Jews themselves at that time recognized it as such; there seems to be very little evidence in the Old Testament. That's, if you look at it from that angle as far as we are concerned, it is one thing. That's where you have to watch the difference. I am sure that in many places in the Old Testament we use Bible passages for which the New Testament gives us the answer. It certainly is much clearer then, and the ancient Jews might not even recognize this as Messianic.

COMMITTEE: There, too, wouldn't the Confessions make plain that from the beginning of time men were not saved in any other way? This was understood even then as Messianic.

PROF. S: I am not so sure whether that—again, you see, in terms of the, whether everybody would accept that—that necessarily the Confessions are not merely giving an exegetical judgment as to the meaning of Genesis 3:15. As far as the Messiah is concerned and policy for Him, there is no question that when you begin to identify it, is it always Genesis 3:15 that gives you all of that? There may be different—

COMMITTEE: Prof. X in one of his essays recently in the *Festschrift* says Abraham was not a Christian. Would you care to comment on that?

PROF. S: Well, if you would, I think this is a semantic deal where you think of him as a Christian in the sense of—I can't, I am not saying I am reflecting his viewpoint, I don't know it. But if you think of it in terms of believing Jesus Christ was a man who was born in Bethlehem a man of Nazareth and all of that as part of the Christian and that the Old Testament faith was explicit as mine, as Christ died on the cross, that Abraham thought of Christ the Messiah dying on the cross, no. But he certainly was Christian in a sense. I think it is a very important one; that Abraham put his full confidence in his salvation in the Lord's action in some shape or form. How that was identified for Abraham would be difficult for all of us to answer unless we go to the New Testament and read it backwards. But unfortunately Abraham didn't have the New Testament. That Abraham was saved by faith in the promises of his God, in that sense he was a Christian.

Prof. C Transcript

pp. 31-35

COMMITTEE: All right. Now are there any Old Testament passages that speak directly to the Messiah who is to come? A direct prophecy versus the typical?

PROF. C: Yes, this is obviously an example of the typical. Yes, certainly there are a number of passages in the prophetic books which are in the form of a direct prediction and which use terms that speak about a Messiah, an Anointed One, or even without that particular term, speak about a coming Ruler in the lineage of David through whom God will exercise His rule.

COMMITTEE: Could you mention some of these that you feel are directly predictive of Christ and his suffering?

PROF. C: Yes, Micah, chapter 5, referring to Bethlehem as the source from which this Ruler will come; Jeremiah 23, the Scion from the branch of David; and a number of others of that nature.

COMMITTEE: Would you classify Isaiah 53 in that?

PROF. C: Isaiah 53, in the technical sense of the Messianic expectation, I would not classify as Messianic. But by this term, now, "Messiah, Messianic," I mean the expectation of One who is in the line of David, the Anointed of God. Because Isaiah 53 doesn't specifically indicate that the figure being described here is a kingly figure.

COMMITTEE: Yes, the Servant of Jehovah. Does that apply in that day to someone, or does this apply only to Christ, you think?

PROF. C: This, I guess, as we all know, is one of the big disputed questions, and I have found for myself that it becomes most meaningful if I recognize the likelihood, although I can't really prove it, the likelihood of some application in the day of the prophet.

COMMITTEE: Why is that more helpful to you?

PROF. C: Because it's in a context where the whole, where the prophet is speaking always about the return of his people to Jerusalem and the fact that his people have been among the nations, and have been suffering there, that now, that his people will be returned and will be vindicated, and God will show His glory through them. And while it's not explicit in Isaiah 53, I tend to think that the servant mentioned there is somehow connected with the servant identified as Israel earlier in the book.

COMMITTEE: A little bit more specifically, you mentioned predictive Messianic prophecy. Are there passages that predict His suffering and resurrection without the reinterpretation of the New Testament looking back, but I mean in a predictive way?

PROF. C: When you add that last phrase, that—

COMMITTEE: Well, so that those who wouldn't have had the New Testament could have read the Old Testament and been able to see not all the details as to who carried the cross or what time it took place but that the Messiah was to suffer for the sins of the world and rise again?

PROF. C: I do not see that a person prior to the New Testament era could have read these details, even, from the Messianic prophecies, those prophecies which speak of a ruler, a king from the house of David, who will be God's representative on earth. In most, I think in all cases of those prophecies the emphasis is on the glory of the Messiah.

COMMITTEE: What would you do then with the passage in First Peter 1, where it mentions about how the prophets predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory?

PROF. C: Yes, there, of course, I think the word Christ is not the more vague reference to Messiah from an Old Testament viewpoint, but the very specific reference to Jesus the Christ, and so what he is talking about is the actual sufferings that of course St. Peter knows about, and he is therefore referring to other passages in the Old Testament apart from the strictly Messianic prophecies. And these other passages would, of course, include the Isaiah 53 one, which our Lord did definitely apply to Himself, and which indicates that God's way of working among men is through a representative of His who actually suffers, not, it's not the theology of glory, the—

COMMITTEE: I'm not sure I understand you. You said "other than the Messianic," but if it speaks of the sufferings of Christ, it would certainly be Messianic, wouldn't it? And it says—

PROF. C: That would be Messianic in a different sense.

COMMITTEE: He's talking about the Messianic Man, the Anointed One.

COMMITTEE: O.K. I'm hitting on the word "predicting," I guess; the holy writer says they predicted these things. You mentioned that Peter knew about it, but that isn't the point of what he's saying here. He says the prophets predicted the suffering. I wasn't sure that I got your answer to that.

PROF. C: Yes, I think we got bogged down on the use of the term Messianic, which I was using in a very narrow sense, but if it's differently defined, I'd apply it differently to them. Would you care to ask me about a specific passage that talks about the—

COMMITTEE: I was asking if you would give us one that you would say predicted the sufferings of Christ, since Peter said they did.

PROF. C: Offhand —

COMMITTEE: Let's take a specific one. How about Psalm 110, which Christ refers to in Matthew 22:41, when he says: "How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls Him Lord?" and then: "If David calls Him Lord, how can He be his son?"

PROF. C: Yes, sir. This was one passage that I didn't, I mean one thing that I didn't include in my bibliography for you. I didn't realize until yesterday that I had had a couple of sermons asked for for *Concordia Pulpit*, and one of these was on the assigned text of Psalm 110, so that was in the '69 *Pulpit*, and I did make some references there. Well, I would see this one as being Messianic in the stricter sense, depicting the king — which may, in fact I am convinced that it originally does refer to the currently reigning king, in other words the son of David who is now on the throne, but then easily receives the typical reapplication to a future king and ultimately to Christ our Lord.

COMMITTEE: What do you do then with Christ's exegesis on it when He says in Matthew 22:45, that David calls Him Lord? How can He be David's son? Now if, I think Christ is saying there, if I understand this correctly, is that calling Him Lord indicates He is a superior. Would that not then indicate that it is pointing directly to Christ, not to anyone else?

PROF. C: Not to me. And I have worried about that a great deal too. And I finally came up with what to me barely gets me across the hump. But it seems to me that one way of understanding the original intention of this psalm is that it is written with respect to the son of David who is next taking the throne, namely, Solomon, as it was in history. And it seems to me that the whole psalm applies beautifully to Solomon and of course to any further sons of David or in the lineage of David who actually sat on the throne.

COMMITTEE: How do you answer the Lord's question then to the Pharisees?

PROF. C: That He's speaking —

COMMITTEE: He asked a question. He says, "If David calls Him Lord, how can He be David's son?" and it says: "No man could answer a word in reply." And I'm just wondering what your answer would be.

PROF. C: I'm not sure that I would do any better, but I guess Christ's implication is that He must be something more than a, in that context, something more than a mere human being even.

Prof. B Transcript

pp. 8-9

COMMITTEE: I would just like to finish on this because I am not sure I understood Prof. B's answer to your question. As you read this, it appears (does it not?) that Cyrus is something in the future, I think is what Dr. X was getting at. If this was inspired, as you seem to indicate that it was regardless of who wrote it, then it was inspired in the sixth century but made to appear as though it were much before. What did you mean when you said it is not demonstrable, you are not sure what it is demonstrable, that it appears to be something in the future?

PROF. B: We don't know how the people of the Old Testament interpreted those chapters of Isaiah, but I think from all of the evidence that is available, beginning at chapter 40 the book was written, let's say, in 550; that is the date that I quoted. Well, Cyrus came in 538. Now I would hold that it was written in a prophetic vein of Cyrus but in the very immediate future, from the vantage point of the Babylonian Captivity, which was just about over.

To show that I teach that kind of verbal prophetic inspiration, may I say this: When the prophet Amos began to preach almost simultaneously with Isaiah in 750, there was as yet no sign on the historical horizon that the Assyrian armies were going to threaten Palestine. An yet Amos is preaching that judgment is coming from the east, and he even mentions that it is coming from the land of Assyria. I have no way of knowing where Amos got that except from God Himself. But Amos is speaking to his own cen-

tury, and that is why the situation is a little different there than it is in the case of the two Cyrus references in Isaiah.

COMMITTEE: So it is still predictive, but it is only a few years predictive.

PROF. B: That is right.

COMMITTEE: Do you feel uncomfortable if the prediction stretches out longer? Is that what you are saying?

PROF. B: No. I feel that there are no other instances in the Old Testament where God took that big leap of 200 years.

COMMITTEE: You spoke before of a harmony between the documentary hypothesis and verbal inspiration. I think you said providing these are properly defined or something like that, and then we talked a little bit about verbal inspiration and defining this. In most of our literature I guess this has assumed also on the part of the human writers a freedom from what, lapses of memory and errors of fact. Would your definition of verbal inspiration also include this for the redactors or editors and so forth of the Old Testament?

PROF. B: I think this ties in directly with the idea of the veracity and the truthfulness of the entire Old and New Testament record. Yes, because this is God's verbally inspired Word, therefore the authors are assured of keeping it truthful.

COMMITTEE: Well, factually also!

PROF. B: That is right.

Prof. XX

"The Meaning of Archaeology for the Exegetical Task"
CTM, Oct. 1970, pp. 525, 526

p. 525

The classic boundaries of the land of Canaan are more clearly definable in the light of recent archaeological exploration. In Gen. 15:18 Yahweh is described as promising Abram that He will give his descendants the land extending all the way "from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates." Exegetically the question arises whether this is a bona fide predictive prophecy or whether it reflects the boundaries of the Davidic Empire of the 10th century B.C. read back into the patriarchal period by the ancient JE tradition.

p. 526

The date for the beginning of plaster-lined cisterns thus needs to be moved back some 300 years in the light of such newly discovered evidence. This matter of water conservation is important, since it indicates how archaeologists must be ready to revise their conclusions in the light of newly accumulated evidence — just as theologians must.

Prof. XX

The Form and Meaning of the Fall Narrative
Concordia Seminary Print Shop, St. Louis, Mo., 1965, pp. 22-25

The writer rejects the traditional interpretation of Genesis 3:15 as the *protevangelium*, or first Gospel promise of the coming Messiah. He holds that Gen. 3:15 is primarily addressed to the snake and speaks of his doom (enmity oracle). The author believes it is possible that the New Testament alludes to the other side of the oracle, namely, an implied victory for man (Rom. 16:20; Rev. 20:2, 12:9).

The snake is a sign of man's continual temptations and especially his estrangement from God. Christ's victory on the cross has the significance of a victory of the Second Man and thus from the "hindsight of the cross" we gain a richer understanding.

The author finds symbols of grace in the Genesis account. (Cain is permitted to live. Eve is called the "mother of all living." Man's nakedness is covered.) However, he does not find a *protevangelium* in the sense of a clear pointing to Christ in the text of Gen. 3:15.

Prof. U Transcript

pp. 17-18

PROF. U: Which Isaiah passage?

COMMITTEE: Seven, with reference to the *almah* and to *παρθένος* in Matthew. Now what contextual force is there

at all between Old and New Testament there, as you do your exegete?

PROF. U: I think it depends on the text, to take the one we were talking about a while ago on Amos. I think that when Amos is talking about "woe to you who desire the day of Yehveh," he is not saying, "Woe to you who look for the second coming of Jesus." I think the second coming of Jesus is of the same type, it's the same type of day that's expected; but obviously the people of Amos' time were not looking for the second coming of Jesus, so that there the understanding of the Amos passage, I don't think is particularly clarified by the New Testament reference, and there may be other passages where it is.

COMMITTEE: How about the Isaiah passage? Isaiah 7?

PROF. U: What's your specific question on that?

COMMITTEE: With reference to the meaning of *almah*, "virgin young woman," meaning of a prophecy primarily for the time of Ahaz, or looking beyond this time, Matthew says this happened that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, and then he uses *παρθένος*, which can only mean virgin, removes any ambiguity with reference to the *almah*, if you look upon the New Testament as interpreting the Old. In other words, is Matthew reading something new into that that wasn't in the Old Testament? Is this retrodiction? Or if you look at it as prophecy, can the way the New Testament sees this fulfilled help us in terms of what was in the Old Testament? Do you see and do you use in your exegesis a connection between the two? Or —

PROF. U: Sure. With regard to both the Isaiah passage, my first assignment I think is to make clear what the passage

meant in its original context and then to follow that through and to say what it might mean in the New Testament and what it might mean today in the preaching. Dr. X knows from attending the course that X and I teach together that one of the main assignments in the course after a lot of lexicography, etc., is precisely a sermon on that text which we exegeted to death. The specific problem in Isaiah now is to say that Ahaz was not really willing to trust God, but he was resorting to all sorts of military preparations, etc., to escape Ephraim and Syria, which were ranked against him. And that the prophet Isaiah comes to him and says, "Lo and behold, you are going to have a son, and the significance of this son is that he's going to have a name: 'God with us.' And if you really hear clearly what God is trying to say to you, that son's name is going to be 'God with us,' and if you really believed and trusted that, that God would be with you, you wouldn't have to shake like a leaf, like the text says." Now —

COMMITTEE: That's all you think it says?

PROF. U: No, I'm not done yet. That when you go on from that and when you say what St. Matthew is asserting then, he is saying, I think in a new context, or a new time, that as a matter of fact God is with us in a way that far transcends that and fulfills it, fills it up to the brim, and He is going to do this through a young woman, whom He calls the virgin. And the virgin birth, I told you I affirm, I believe, and as a matter of fact though, the significance of Jesus is that He is really the sign and the guarantee and the demonstration that God is with man and that as an offshoot of that, or that as an accompanying factor, I'm very happy to boldly and joyfully confess the virgin birth, but it's the salvific significance is the way God has been decisively with me in this God-man.

5e, 7. The Findings Concerning the Historical-Critical Method and the Doctrine of Angels

Typical users of the historical-critical method generally regard Biblical entities such as angels as mythological concepts carried over into the Old Testament from the myths of the Near Eastern neighbors of the Israelites. The Fact Finding Committee did not explore this topic except in a few instances. In two of those instances the committee found reluctance to affirm (1) the devil as a personality, (2) the existence of good and evil angels. In view of the many statements of the Scriptures, as well as of the Lutheran Confessions, regarding the reality of the devil, it may be concluded that the reluctance to declare unequivocally that angels and the devil(s) exist reflects the typical attitude of historical-critical scholars mentioned above.

See the following transcripts for a discussion of this point.

Cf. Appendix IV: A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles, IV, "I. Historical Methods of Biblical Interpretation," 4.

Documentation

Prof. C Transcript

pp. 9-13

COMMITTEE: You emphasized in your statement the importance of seeking to determine what God has done and what God has said, and especially the historical base that's necessary in using the historical-critical method. And some of the non-Lutheran proponents, or people who have used this method, have used it with at least the end result to take away much of the historical base in Old Testament story or narrative. Now for example, would you consider it legitimate to say that the angel stories in the Old Testament are not necessarily — that the angels might be mythological entities, but this is simply a graphic way of describing how God happened to enter into the lives of these people?

PROF. C: You're asking me whether I would consider this —

COMMITTEE: Would you consider this legitimate to say that the angels are not necessarily, this is just a way of describ-

ing God's entrance into the lives of these people? We don't have to believe that there are such things as angel beings?

PROF. C: Well, I think I would recognize a person's right to trace the historical development of a belief in angels, and to recognize that there are references to such things in the mythologies of the nations round about Israel. So to that extent, to the extent that he can indicate that, he can speak of this as a mythological thing also.

COMMITTEE: I was using mythological in the sense though of not being, not something that's found elsewhere in myth, but something that is in fact not, you know, historical in the Scriptures.

PROF. C: Oh, I was understanding the term in a more technical sense.

COMMITTEE: The reality of it is the substance of what I was getting at.

COMMITTEE: In other words, I think what you are getting at—correct me if I am wrong—is: Do the references in the Old Testament, or the New for that matter, to the angels, these spirits, which are obviously beyond our ordinary grasp, our ordinary experience and so on, or any research—there are many who would say, I suppose—well, you refer in one of your essays to Robinson—would say, well this is a kind of a thing 20th-century man can't accept? Now do you personally feel the fact that they are mentioned in the Scriptures, the Old and the New, not just in one place, but in many places—on that basis do you yourself believe in angels?

PROF. C: I would like to point to the fact that the Bible refers to these beings around God in many different ways. Now in some places they are called angels, messengers, a translation of both the Hebrew and the Greek word for it, and in other places they are referred to in pretty different ways. They are called, well, the host of heaven, they are called the sons of God, the *bene-El*, the sons of El. They are referred to, I think, implicitly in a number of references especially in the Old Testament to the council of advisers round about the Lord. They are referred to as seraphim in the vision of Isaiah. And all of these are, it seems to me, pictures of God as the king surrounded by his court, just the way any ancient monarch would have his advisers round about him. They do His bidding just as all His creatures do His bidding, but these in a special way. And so the intent of this is to mean, I think, that God is the supreme Ruler over everything, and to the extent that anyone else has power or abilities at all—whether human or in worlds that we do not, are unable to see—this is all at the command of God Himself and completely under His control. So I see this as in part actually being a corrective, very intentionally a corrective, against the ways that peoples round about Israel believed about the heavenly beings—who of course worshiped them, regarded them all as gods, in a real pantheon kind of way.

COMMITTEE: With reference to, say, any of a number of these descriptive names, the names that are given, and with reference to ministering spirits and so on—obviously not identified with God as you yourself have said. But are there entities like that? Or if a person says, suppose as a 20th-century man I say: "Well, I cannot stomach this. It's just too much for me." Would you say, "Well, that's fine, it's O.K."? That's one question. Really the prior question though that I want to come back to, is: What is your own personal belief? Are there any such entities as angels as described in this? Or is this simply a way of saying that God's got everything under control?

PROF. C: Well, I'm not prepared to deny that there are angels, that there are all kinds of things that I don't know about, that there are powers of, in an unseen world. The point of what I was saying, I think, is to point to the variety of the Biblical ways of speaking of this kind of thing—which indicates to me that the individual details, since they appear in different ways and different places, aren't the major thing.

COMMITTEES Now, we're not of course asking whether they've got six wings as in Isaiah and so forth, which obviously is a picturesque way of putting it. But do you personally believe in angels?

PROF. C: Well, as I said, I don't deny that there are angels.

COMMITTEE: You don't deny, but you don't, you're not answering with a yes or a no. You don't deny that there are, but do you affirm it?

PROF. C: I don't believe in angels in the same sense that I believe in our Lord.

COMMITTEE: "In the same sense." Now, would you explain what you mean by that?

PROF. C: That I would put my trust in them. I don't deny their existence, so if you want to turn that around the other way, yes, I believe that they can exist, I don't know anything about it other than this richly, varied way that the Bible has of speaking of unseen powers around God.

COMMITTEE: Well, if I understand you correctly, you say you wouldn't want to deny that there are and you wish to affirm that there might be. Now what about the existence of a personal devil? The fathers—aside from the Scriptural witness—in the Confessions you know, speak of him as con-

niving and murdering, and killing, and tricking, and tempting, and I guess you know dozens and dozens of references to their confession of a belief in a personal evil angel, or the leader of the evil angels. Would you answer that question the same way as you do the question about the good angels?

PROF. C: Now the question in this case is—?

COMMITTEE: Do you believe in the existence of a personal devil?

PROF. C: Yes, I think I would answer it in the same way.

COMMITTEE: "In the same way." I'd like to be real sure now we're understanding you right. You don't deny a personal devil, but you don't necessarily affirm him either. Is that what you are saying? Maybe you'd better make a more fuller statement so we don't misunderstand you, that's—above all, we don't want to do that.

PROF. C: I certainly do not wish to deny the existence of these unseen powers, both those that assist God and those that are powers of evil in His world. The question would be whether the preaching of a sermon on this would be of help to, well, to myself or to other 20th-century people. Under certain, in certain situations, I should think yes, certainly. Maybe not to the same extent, though, as Luther for instance found it to be a very helpful way—going actually quite a ways farther (as I believe Dr. X implied) than the Scriptures themselves in describing the devil as his enemy.

Prof. C Transcript

pp. 20-22

COMMITTEE: Well, as a theologian of the church, summing it up—and obviously we don't have a chance to go through all the passages that deal with this—is it your opinion that Scripture teaches that Satan is an entity, personality, a reality, or is it just possibly a description for the forces of evil in general? What's your personal belief?

PROF. C: I would like to think of it—my personal belief, then, is in terms of the distinction that I was making before also, that there are these ways of speaking about the devil, Satan, the accuser, and these ways change from Old Testament to the New Testament—and in fact within the confines of the Old Testament—so that these details of the way in which he is personalized or anthropomorphically described are not the major point of the doctrine. The doctrine, however, holds that there is, well, you can call it forces of evil, there is a very strong evil power in this world, contrary to the way God intended it, and that this is a great danger for the Christian in his life—a danger which can be described in terms of a personal enemy, as the Bible itself does in many places, but in other places it talks about it as powers and principalities and so on.

COMMITTEE: One more and then we'll leave it. When Christ cast the devils out of these two men and they flee—ask permission to flee—into the herd of swine, and the swine jump off the cliff—what do you make of that text, what meaning does that have?

PROF. C: I don't feel constrained to connect that directly with the question of the devil, the personal devil, that we've just been—

COMMITTEE: Well, they're described as "evil spirits."

PROF. C: Yes—I think using a different term, in fact. So that the text doesn't indicate a real connection with Satan.

COMMITTEE: But what does that tell you about evil spirits, with reference to: Are they real, or are they just a way of describing somebody that's got some physical condition which Christ relieves him of this problem? Or does this say anything about the reality of spirits?

PROF. C: It certainly says something about the reality of the effects, because—This is within the area of observable data, that this evil in the world—brought about, I would say, by the existence of sin—has very definite adverse effects.

COMMITTEE: Suppose I say that on the basis of stories like that existing in the literature of the people around Israel, beside that actually that business of the pigs jumping off the cliff is just a little addition that somebody put into the story, to sort of emphasize Christ and how He could com-

mand the devils, and on that basis I would say that all the text really teaches is that Christ relieves problems, and solves problems, and so on (But that,), and the forces of evil are great; but, I say, this business of the pigs jumping off the cliff, that is something I don't have to accept. What would your reaction be to that approach?

PROF. C: I think when a person uses the word "teaches" as you did in stating that, then I can agree that this is what the text *teaches*. I might add other things to it too, that are *taught* by this text. And I do like to make that distinction between what a text teaches and what is incidental or assumed already, because I do think that historically, according to a proper historical method, this is the way you determine what the original intent of a particular text is: that which it actually purposes to teach and not what is part of the cultural background that didn't have to be taught because it was taken for granted by everyone.

COMMITTEE: Would you say then that I could deny the factuality of this business of the pigs taking the big jump and still be a good Lutheran theologian?

PROF. C: Yes, I think you could still be a good Lutheran theologian.

Prof. J Transcript

pp. 27-29

COMMITTEE: Do you believe the devil is a person?

PROF. J: I would find no passage in Holy Scripture that would suggest this.

COMMITTEE: What is your conception of the devil?

PROF. J: Because when I think of "person" the only meaning that "person" can have, apart from the fourth-century theological use of "person" in connection with the Holy Trinity, is the six people, seven people that are involved here. In other words the term "person" connotes "humanity" to me.

COMMITTEE: All right. But I think you know what I am talking about with reference to, as opposed to, let's say a force. Let's say an entity, an intelligent entity, analogous [to], although on the other end of the spectrum from God the Father, Son, and Spirit.

PROF. J: Well, certainly not analogous to the fatherhood, to the — what we have habitually called the "person," the *persona*, the hypostasis of the sacred Trinity. I think we have to be very careful to use that exclusively in that connection.

COMMITTEE: We frequently say "God is a person." I think we understand that as opposed to a cosmic force. Using it in that sense —

PROF. J: Again, when that statement is made, I have learned to want to know who is making it and in what context.

COMMITTEE: What would you say is your understanding then of the devil?

PROF. J: I would have to say ultimately that the devil is, that he is a creature, he is not supernatural, he is super-human. He is, he has been conquered by our Lord Jesus Christ, his work has been destroyed, our Lord is the ultimate and final Victor over the devil and over all of the demonic powers that exist. Who he is or what he is I can only imagine through — you used the word, and I think quite appropriately — the analogy of human language. I have never seen a devil, and therefore I have no concrete opportunity for conceptualizing him.

COMMITTEE: With reference to the angels, which, you know, "left their first habitation and so on" —

PROF. J: Of course, this is in one of the books of the New Testament that has an awful lot of exegetical problems attached to it and one which I think you would have to ultimately say is at the periphery of the canon.

COMMITTEE: Let's take Luke, who talks about Satan leaving Christ in the wilderness.

PROF. J: I said that I believe there is a Satan.

COMMITTEE: You believe it is permissible for a Lutheran to deny that there is a Satan as such and speak simply in terms of a force of evil?

PROF. J: I would want to see the context in which he says that.

COMMITTEE: You think there might be circumstances under which it would be possible?

PROF. J: I would want to know precisely what he is saying, what he is trying to antagonize. Because I think that —

COMMITTEE: If he is antagonizing the mythical concept.

PROF. J: If he is antagonizing the wrong concept, he might be offering a conceivably desirable antidote. If he and I had the chance to discuss it, he might ultimately end up with a somewhat different formulation from the one that he came with, or possibly I would be better instructed after he and I had talked together. But, forgive me, I am a little leery about these alternatives because particularly through my researches of the last few years I have discovered how difficult it is to simply take a statement and say, "Is it right or is it wrong?" without knowing a great deal more about the context in which it is in.

5 e, 8. The Findings Concerning the Use of the Historical-Critical Method and the Question of Authorship of Biblical Books

Authorship

In the Old Testament Department at the Seminary the Documentary Hypothesis (JEDP) is quite generally accepted. Correspondingly the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is rejected. A double authorship for the Book of Isaiah is widely assumed.

Authorship of the New Testament books was not so widely discussed by the Fact Finding Committee. However, in two instances it became apparent that the apostolic authorship of a New Testament book was not regarded as having relevance for a confessional commitment. Faith is made the decisive element. One author holds that the letter to the Ephesians was not written by Paul, as it claims to be, but by an individual who may or may not have been one of Paul's disciples but who wanted the letter to be understood as Paul's teaching. If this principle were granted, the entire New Testament could consist of forged apostolic documents. The argument from style used against the Pauline authorship of Ephesians could be used and has been used against the authorship of other New Testament writings.

For illustrations of the position described above, see the following:

Documentation

Prof. I Transcript

pp. 11-12

COMMITTEE: May I interrupt you a minute before I lose this thought. You said people like Matthew, Mark and Luke. Is it your belief that Matthew wrote the Gospel ascribed to him, or was this written much later and by someone else, or Mark?

PROF. I: Let me ask you—this is a kind of an interesting question which I want to ask you somewhere along the line. What does that question have to do with my affirmation of faith and my professional commitment? If I give one answer or another, what does it have to do with the question that we are here for?

COMMITTEE: Well, I'd have to say, Prof. I, the committee in asking its questions is trying to establish an overall picture, and I don't think it is fruitful for us in any given instance asking what I think is a legitimate question which is often asked in books on isagogics to debate each question or even many of them. However, if you do not want to answer that one—

PROF. I: No, I'm prepared to answer it, but I think that it is a relevant—

COMMITTEE: It is part of the overall picture.

PROF. I: But it is a relevant question which I put to you because you can—

COMMITTEE: The committee isn't going to get into a dialog with you, Prof. I. That is supposed to not be our business. We are just supposed to find out what you think. We are not supposed to—

PROF. I: All right, let me enter it into the record so that it is there if you are not going to give me the answer I will give you the answer and that is—

COMMITTEE: Now we are just supposed to ask questions, you are supposed to give answers.

PROF. I: That is that—well—ya, sure, but if I need some clarification, I am going to ask you.

COMMITTEE: Yes, sir, you may, as to what I am asking you have every right to that.

PROF. I: I make no pretense at expertise on the synoptic problem. I happen to have done a little bit of work on that, and you have to if you are going to wind up with a Th.D. degree, as I had to do a little work in other areas. But I am no expert, and whether I say that I think Matthew wrote Matthew or I think that that name has been attributed to Matthew from earliest Christian times and I don't know who wrote it is really irrelevant to the question of my confessional commitment and whether or not I am true to what we are committed to in the Lutheran Church.

Prof. R Transcript

pp. 22-23

PROF. R: No, I am willing to speak to that as long as we recognize the limitations of the document. Let's talk about the apostolicity of Ephesians. That is what the little fragment that you saw was on. In all other respects except stylistic ones I think Ephesians is Pauline. But the stylistic arguments—here I have to defer to people who are experts in this field and I am not, very clearly I am not—the stylistic arguments lead me to conclude—and I do this very provisionally—that the man who actually wrote the letter as we call it, the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians, was not Paul. I wouldn't stake my life on that, and I may well be wrong, particularly in the face of so many other scholars who have said that it was Paul. But that is not so much what I was concerned to say. (I wish now I had reread this before I discussed it, because that has been some time ago that I wrote that.) The thing that I wanted to say was that, even if it were not Paul, it seems to me that you cannot do exegetical justice to the content of the Epistle to the Ephesians unless you read it the way in which the author meant it to be read. He very clearly means it to be read as Paul's letter to the Ephesians. He means it to be read as being apostolic, and not just apostolic in general. He means it to be read as the work of that apostle who is Paul, and that that is not an

extraneous isagogical consideration for him. The apostolicity of what he writes is essential to the whole point of the theology of the epistle. What I am trying to do here, Dr. X (I have to wrestle with my failing memory at this point), what I am trying to do is to not fall into the trap of some authorship arguments that I have seen which would say, because the author was not whoever—now, in this case, Paul—therefore by that very token the apostolicity of the epistle is dismissable, it is expendable. And I wanted the reader to be in the bind, if he is going to say that the author was not Paul, be in the bind of however not being able to say that you can then dismiss the question of apostolicity, because I think with this epistle that is not an option. The apostolicity of this epistle is essential to the document itself.

COMMITTEE: Why is it not an option?

PROF. R: Because the writer will develop some of the basic arguments—particularly the Christological, soteriological sections in the first two or three chapters—around his own claim to authority. And his claim to authority is that he has been bequeathed the mystery of Christ, God's plan for the ages, because he is an apostle.

COMMITTEE: Now if it were not Paul and there is no other apostle you can think of that readily fits, there is somebody who is writing as though he were Paul. Does that not make him then an impostor?

PROF. R: No, that it most certainly does not.

COMMITTEE: Why does it not?

PROF. R: Well, that is assuming (of course I am not telling you anything) that is assuming that pseudonymity is for documents of this kind in that period a case of forgery. That is why I preceded my remarks before by saying in all other respects it is Pauline. Everything you find in Ephesians you can find elsewhere in the authenticated Pauline corpus. I could well see (I am just guessing) but I could well see that if it were Paul—and as I said, I don't stake my life on whether it is or isn't—but if it were not Paul I could well see where a follower of his (and let me interject it is interesting if this weren't Paul then it is a Pauline theologian the likes of which we have no evidence of in the early church) if it weren't Paul, then I can well see that the reason he is writing as Paul is not as an impostor but precisely as the contrary. Out of modesty he is saying, "Nothing I have here is my own, all of this is Paul's." And he is right. It all is.

Prof. DD Transcript

p. 17

COMMITTEE: I believe that earlier, Prof. DD, you said something about the inspiration of Scriptures, an article of faith that can't be proved, and so forth. Do you find any significant number of people who attempt to demonstrate or prove the inspiration of Scripture?

PROF. DD: Do I find them? Well, I haven't run across them in large numbers.

COMMITTEE: Do you feel there are persons in our own church body who are attempting to do that, demonstrate or prove the inspiration of Scripture?

PROF. DD: I think there are those. This may not answer your question, but I think it has bearing. There are those who feel that the inspiration of Scripture demands a single authorship to certain books, and I don't think that follows at all, just as little for the book of Psalms or the book of Proverbs or the Gospel of John or any of the others. So I think that people who do that, that say, "If this was not written by a single author, then it was not inspired," they are wrong.

Prof. K Transcript

pp. 18-19

COMMITTEE: Just on that point, then we'll come back to you. The first control states the authoritative word for the church today is the canonical word, not precanonical sources, forms, or traditions, however useful in investigation these possibilities may on occasion be for clear understanding what the

canonical text intends to say. Now if I understand this correctly, what this says is that no speculation or research concerning sources, forms, or traditions is authoritative over against the Word, but it is the text as we have it, the canonical text, which is the authority. Do you agree to that, or do you place any restrictions on it?

PROF. K: I don't know of any restrictions that I place on that. I don't really know where I have a problem between the Word of Yahwist and the canonical Word, that is the Pentateuch.

COMMITTEE: Yes. The word of the Yahwist would presumably be a source, wouldn't it?

PROF. K: Yes, of the Pentateuch. If such a thing arose, I would assert the message of the canon, the canonical, the Pentateuch, which is a canonical document. I don't have this problem, however, I haven't run up against it, as I could recognize it.

COMMITTEE: If I heard you correctly before, you said that if Jesus said, "Moses wrote of Me," then Moses must have written of Jesus; however, if you accept multiple authorship, there wouldn't be necessarily anything that you could identify as Mosaic, you would probably be saying, is this correct, that somewhere along the way, the Yahwist or others involved in getting this together must have picked up something that Moses wrote but we wouldn't be able to identify it necessarily.

PROF. K: Well, you do have in the Yahwist account certain references to material that Moses wrote.

COMMITTEE: O.K. But this, you would limit these words of Jesus to that?

PROF. K: Not necessarily, but you know, if you were going to say to me, "Tell me what you think Moses wrote," it would be those passages, you know, that the Yahwist ascribes to him.

COMMITTEE: You've talked in terms of the two accounts of Genesis, Elohist and Yahwist. Are those in any way in disagreement with one another, contradict theologically or any other way?

PROF. K: That they contradict one another in fact, yes. That they contradict one another in what they have to say about God and the presence and action of God, no.

COMMITTEE: What are the contradictions in fact? Could you list them?

PROF. K: Well, you can go down the line in the two creation accounts and see the differences in fact.

COMMITTEE: Could you name one or two, just off hand?

PROF. K: In the Yahwist account, the order of creation is man, animals, woman. In the Priestly account, the order of creation is animals, then man, and then woman. That is a difference in fact.

5 f. The Findings Concerning Permissiveness

One of the major findings of the fact-finding inquiry was a marked permissiveness on the part of a number of the professors. While they themselves professed a doctrinal stance in harmony with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, they were reluctant to condemn deviating positions. This is illustrated in the following sections.

The question must be asked: Does reluctance to condemn false teaching not in effect bless it as a viable option and then involve the person permitting it in false doctrine? The Lutheran confessors not only proclaimed the truth, they were vigorous in their condemnation of error. "We condemn and reject these errors," is a familiar theme of the confessors. It is in fact an act of love to condemn false doctrine, so that men may be warned and avoid it.

5 f, 1. Permissiveness: Miracles

As mentioned earlier in the report, all the professors granted the possibility of miracles having actually been performed as the Bible records. However, for various reasons there was a willingness to permit the abandonment of a historical view ("they really happened") of the miracles.

Documentation

Prof. XX

"What Does 'Inerrancy' Mean?"
CTM, Sept. 1965, pp. 592-3

In applying the criterion of human experience to which we have previously adverted, there will likewise be inevitable differences of opinion—for example, as to the extent that midrashic influence can be allowed in the Old Testament or in the New. Obviously, we who believe in the almighty power of a Pantocrator to whom nothing will be impossible

will not exclude the possibility of miracle at every point on principle, but the other principle of the economy of miracles may induce one or the other of us to accept an alternative solution in certain cases.

Prof. L Transcript

pp. 19-20

COMMITTEE: On the same lines, if someone does treat events in the life of Christ, for example, His walking on water, raising of Lazarus, or whatever, as an invention of a later pious age, would you regard persistence in such exegesis as

divisive of fellowship with the denomination, or is it just a tolerable exegetical difference of point of view?

PROF. L: I would have to know why the man is sensitive to that.

COMMITTEE: Suppose he says his scholarship leads him to this as a result of his scholarly studies in terms of source hypothesis he decides having gone through the form or redaction criticism and so on that he concludes that this again is something which is added by the church to give a historical matrix for some saying so the event is really imaginative addition.

PROF. L: In my experience I just wouldn't talk until I heard how he preached this.

COMMITTEE: Suppose he says that from the pulpit in so many words, "I am going to preach to you about Christ walking on the water. Of course He probably never walked on the water; that is what the New Testament church put in so that we could preach a little spiritual truth here."

PROF. L: That would be tough.

COMMITTEE: Since you would think it would be tough.

PROF. L: I am saying that is very hypothetical, I have never heard it done.

Prof. V Transcript

pp. 14-14 a

COMMITTEE: Well, see, I am talking about controls, what we may — let me put it this way: If I decide with reference to the doctrine of resurrection that this is a story which the early church in an effort to somehow explain the wonderful feelings they had despite the fact that Christ was dead and gone and in order to perpetuate His teachings and so on in effect invent it so that the tomb really wasn't empty, but when you talk about the resurrection you talk about something spiritual, something eternal but not about Christ really

and truly coming back to life, being quickened and rising. Now suppose I say that I find in the people surrounding Israel enough resurrection myths that I say, what these people have done is, they have adapted a resurrection myth which they picked up say from the Egyptians or somebody, and they have not clocked this and put this into the history of Christ, but it is not historic in the sense that it really actually happened. Is that legitimate for me as a Lutheran theologian?

PROF. V: I don't think so.

COMMITTEE: What would be the control?

PROF. V: The Scriptures, which witness to the resurrection and are accepted by faith.

COMMITTEE: Yes, but in other instances I can go to the Scriptures and say, well, here is an instance of Christ turning water into wine or the raising of Lazarus, can I excise any of those then and give them the same treatment that I just gave the resurrection?

PROF. V: No. I think what you are doing here is, we were talking about what is fundamental, and the Lutheran Church has always had a problem on fundamental and nonfundamental doctrine from the Adiaphoristic Controversy right on to the present time. The problem is of course is: What are the controls? The Scriptures are the controls for me. Now when it comes to the things that deal with the Gospel really, the centrality of the thing in Jesus Christ, the resurrection is a very important thing, but when it comes to changing water into wine or whether a change comes into one of the other miracles which I happen to believe, I don't think that faith is dependent upon whether Christ could change water into wine or do a miracle. That is not the reason I would say that; faith does not depend upon that. I would say that faith depends upon Christ, the Person of Christ, His life, death, and resurrection. Let me say this, I am not trying to limit it for anybody. That is in answer to your question.

5 f, 2. Permissiveness: Christology

The diminution of the authority of the Holy Scriptures that flows from the use of the historical-critical method results in an unwillingness to accept certain sayings of Christ at their face value. For example, Christ says in John 5:45-47: "Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; it is Moses who accuses you, on whom you set your hope. If you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote of Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" Christ also taught in Matthew 12:39-40: "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign; but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the [sea monster], so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here."

In connection with passages of this type, some of the men indicate that it is an acceptable option to believe either that Jesus was accommodating Himself to the views of the people or that He was Himself ignorant of the true facts because He was in the state of humiliation. Such a position implies the denial of the omniscience of Christ in His state of humiliation. It raises the question whether Christ's teaching can be regarded as reliable if the Biblical interpreter is permitted to sit in judgment upon the sayings of Jesus. In this connection, it should be observed that the Scriptures provide no indication that Jesus ever accommodated Himself to error, not even in the state of humiliation, when He did not always make use of the divine knowledge which He had as the Son of God.

For an illustration of this position, see the following transcript and excerpt from an essay:

Documentation

Prof. A Transcript

pp. 23-24

COMMITTEE: Well, in connection with the New Testament. How do you handle the isagogical statements of Jesus, like you did Romans 5, that because Jesus' purpose and ascribing a psalm to David, well, He didn't have that as His purpose, simply ascribed it to him, or when He said, "Moses wrote of Me," obviously His great didactic point was not Mosaic authorship, now, was He accommodating Himself like Paul was in Romans 5, the surface treatment of Genesis, or a first-century Palestinian Jew, or subject to erratic judgments on isagogical questions, or would you accept Mosaic, his isagogical statement in John 5?

PROF. A: Which is the one in John 5?

COMMITTEE: I think it's John 5: "If you would have believed Moses, you would have believed Me, because he wrote of Me," 37 [46] or something.

PROF. A: When this is a common way of speaking of the, as I understand it, a common way of speaking of the Pentateuch, I, it seems to me that option is open and we must look at all the evidence. I certainly, if I were convinced, frankly, that this, my Lord wished to reveal this to me, who wrote the Pentateuch, I would accept it. Absolutely. But I find no threat to my belief in the deity of Christ or in the trustworthiness of the word of judgment and Gospel that He speaks to me in the view that He was not addressing Himself, either. I realize accommodation is not a view that is in good favor with many. I personally don't hold to that; I would hold to that He's using either a common way of speaking or that He is here in that wondrous thing, that state of humiliation where He is a genuine man as we are, for which I thank and praise God that He took that upon Himself to save me.

COMMITTEE: You're saying, then, that Jesus may not have known any better?

PROF. A: Well, I think if He wished to know better He could have.

Addition from Prof. A's response:

In the pressure of the moment there were many infelicities of expression in my interview, but only one item that I really wish to change. In discussing John 5:37, and whether our Lord asserted Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, I responded, "He is here in that wondrous thing, that state of humiliation where He is a genuine man as we are, for which I thank and praise God that He took upon Himself to save me." (I, p. 24:6-8). Dr. X asked, "You're saying then that Jesus may not have known any better." (I, p. 24:11). I responded, "I think if He wished to know better He could have." (I, p. 24:1). But the tape shows that this was a very slow halting answer—because I was upset that such a pejorative term "didn't know any better" should be used of my Lord or that anyone might think that I would choose such an expression of my Lord. I regret that I repeated the term "know better" in my answer and sincerely hope that "may not have known any better" was only an unintended slip on the part of the interviewer.

Prof. XX

Essay: "The Lesson of Jonah"

VII. The New Testament Implications

One of the most difficult problems of interpretation is that of reconciling a didactic explanation of the book of Jonah with the statements which Jesus makes about Jonah in the New Testament. It has been maintained that the texts of Matthew 12:38-42 and Luke 11:29-32 constrain us to conclude that Jesus regarded the Jonah episode as a historical event which actually took place. If He regarded the book of Jonah as a historical account, must we not regard it as such also? It is true that Hebrews 1:2 constrains us to receive the statements of Jesus as the last word from God. At the same time the interpreter must be certain that his understanding of these words of Jesus is the correct and intended understanding.

The question that needs to be answered is this: Did Jesus hold that the prophet Jonah actually spent three days and three nights in the belly of the fish? A number of answers

have been proposed. The first and most radical is that Jesus neither held this nor said it. The account of Luke does not mention the fish. It suggests that the sign of the prophet Jonah was his preaching of repentance to the Ninevites. As Jonah preached repentance, so the Son of Man was to preach repentance. In Matthew, however, the sign of Jonah is the three nights in the fish's belly which is parallel to the sign of Jesus' being in the heart of the earth for a similar period. How is this difference between Luke and Matthew to be explained?

Luke's account has been regarded as the earlier and more original. Matthew in turn, drawing on his more detailed knowledge of the Old Testament, applied the words of Jonah 2:1 to the Lord's resurrection and thus gave the sign of Jonah another emphasis. Matthew's account seems to assume that Jonah told the Ninevites of his wonderful deliverance and that this message was the means of bringing them to repentance. This explanation sounds quite plausible. Neither does it conflict with any teaching of the Christian faith.

The second answer to the question is an affirmative one: Jesus *did* hold that Jonah was actually swallowed by a fish, but He believed this only as a child of His time. Contemporary Judaism was of the opinion that the prophet really experienced the ordeal of the deep and therefore Jesus as a pious Jew accepted it. This answer would imply that in His humiliation Jesus chose to relinquish His omniscience and that He needed to grow in wisdom and stature like every Jewish lad of His time (Luke 2:52). Such a limitation of His understanding would be inseparably bound up with His incarnation and would verify the fact of His humanity.

According to the third answer Jesus did not speak to the question at all, whether the book of Jonah contained history or parable. He used the Jonah incident for purposes of admonition and the impact of such instruction would be just as strong with a parabolic interpretation as it would be with a historical interpretation. If Jesus frequently resorted to parables of His own to proclaim the truths of the kingdom, it is reasonable to conclude that He would appropriate an Old Testament parable for the same purpose. He could surely say that His dwelling in the earth would be comparable to the familiar story of Jonah without thereby implying that the Jonah incident had actually taken place.

But what is to be said about the men of Nineveh who according to Jesus will arise at the judgment with the Lord's generation and condemn it? Does this not mean that the *historical* men of Nineveh will *actually* rise at the final judgment? We of course know that inasmuch as all men will appear before the throne of God's judgment, the inhabitants of ancient Nineveh will also be constrained to stand there. But this does not require us to believe that the men of Nineveh in the eighth century actually heard Jonah's preaching, that they actually repented as a result of it, and that they will actually rise in judgment against the New Testament people. The Lord was holding up the Ninevites as the epitome of the impenitent who finally did respond to the preaching of the prophet. It is as though He were telling unscrupulous people that they would come under the same condemnation as the rich man in Nathan's parable; or as though He were telling lazy people that their lot would be the same as that of the fellow who buried his talent. The characters who are chosen to illustrate a theological truth do not automatically become historical characters. Even presenting them as eventually appearing at the last judgment does not necessarily mean that they will do this in actual fact. If it be argued finally that in the New Testament texts the Ninevites must be historical because the Queen of Sheba who is mentioned with them is historical, then it must be noted that the point of comparison between the Queen and the Ninevites is not the *historical* character, but the *heathen* character of these witnesses: the impenitent people of God will be condemned by those who come from outside the fold.

In the light of this study it ought to be granted that there is room for both the historical and the didactic interpretation of the book of Jonah. Problems arise, no matter which way one turns. If one looks merely at the individual points in the case for a didactic interpretation, their validity may be challenged. But the combined effect of all of these arguments does appear to make a strong case for a parabolic account.

The place of the book of Jonah in the prophetic canon calls for a didactic interpretation. The quotations from earlier literature suggest such an interpretation. The long series of unusual episodes confirms such an interpretation. The lack of information about time, place and people agrees with such an interpretation. The phrases and titles that point to a late date of composition are best explained by

such an interpretation. The theological accent on God's unbiased, universal love can best be understood with such an interpretation. The New Testament passages need not conflict with such an interpretation. Are these factors, taken altogether, not a legitimate reason for at least taking the didactic interpretation of the book into consideration as a live option for a Lutheran pastor and teacher?

5f, 3. Permissiveness: Creation and Fall of Man

The Lutheran Confessions understand the Bible to teach that Adam and Eve were created by a special act of God and were the first man and woman. It is common at the Seminary to reject this Biblical and confessional truth. It is suggested that Adam and Eve are only generic terms for man. The creation of Eve from Adam is not affirmed. This position is consistent with the position of many men, that theistic evolution may be looked upon as God's method of creation. This permissiveness is true of men who themselves profess to believe in a special creation. There is a reluctance to use the term evolution, but special creation is generally not affirmed, and the concepts of evolution are set forth. This position has serious implication for the doctrine of original sin.

In connection with the acceptance of evolution as a viable option, the Biblical and confessional teachings concerning the creation of man in the image of God and his fall into sin in the garden are not clearly taught. The position is taken that the Old Testament nowhere contains the category "image of God."

Along with this denial, some of the men assert that we cannot actually know anything about the history or nature of the fall of man. This attitude opens the door to the position widely held in contemporary theology which describes the universal plight of man which is characterized by rebellion against God, but which refuses to trace the origin of this condition to an actual historical act involving historical people. This position in turn raises serious questions about the nature of God the Creator in connection with the origin of evil.

The symbolic interpretation of the fall of man is set forth clearly in Prof. XX's *The Form and the Meaning of the Fall Narrative — A Detailed Analysis of Genesis 3* (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Print Shop, 1965). The literary form of Genesis 2—3 is said to be most likely that of "symbolic religious history," in which "that which God wishes to relate is described in terms of religious symbol and dramatic story rather than in the abstract language of dogma or the secular annalistic terms of history as it is commonly defined" (p. 9). In this approach the serpent, the trees of Eden, and the cherubim with the flaming sword are all regarded as symbolical. The position accords with the historical-critical theory that the account was written centuries after Moses by an author who uses "metaphors, imagery, word plays, and polemics" that describe the fall in terms relevant to his own day. It is likewise assumed by the professor that no special revelation is operative and that the author writes on the basis of the traditions of his day as would any other historian. The fall is said to be something that actually happened — in some way, but we cannot be sure of either the stages or incidents in man's revolt or the words spoken on the occasion.

Such a symbolic interpretation of the fall, coupled with an acceptance of the evolutionary theory of man's origin, completely erodes the Scriptural basis of the doctrine of original sin as found especially in Genesis and in the New Testament. The outward shell of the doctrine is professed, but its basis in an event that took place in the history of man is reduced to a vestigial remnant.

Contrast this position held at the seminary with that of the Lutheran confessors:

Apology of the Augsburg Confession, II, 16—18: "In the Scriptures righteousness contains not merely the second table of the Decalogue, but also the first, commanding fear of God, faith and love toward him. So original righteousness was intended to involve not only a balanced physical consti-

tution, but these gifts as well: a surer knowledge of God, fear of God, trust in God, or at least the inclination and power to do these things. This the Scripture shows when it says that man was created in the image of God and after his likeness (Gen. 1:27). What else is this than that a wisdom and righteousness was implanted in man that would grasp God and reflect him, that is, that man received gifts like the knowledge of God, fear of God, and trust in God?"

Formula of Concord, Epitome, Art. I. "Original Sin," 4: "God not only created the body and soul of Adam and Eve before the Fall, but also our bodies and souls after the Fall, even though they are corrupted, and God still acknowledges them as his handiwork, as it is written, 'Thy hands fashioned and made me, all that I am round about' (Job 10:8)."

Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Art. I. "Original Sin," 27: "Although in the case of Adam and Eve man's nature was originally created pure, good, and holy, sin did not invade their nature in such a way that Satan created or made something essentially evil and blended this with their nature, as the Manichaeans imagined in their enthusiasm. The fact is, that Satan misled Adam and Eve through the Fall, and that by God's judgment and verdict man lost the concreated righteousness as a punishment. This deprivation and lack, this corruption and wounding which Satan brought about, this loss has so perverted and corrupted human nature (as was indicated above) that all men, conceived and born in the natural way from a father and a mother, now inherit a nature with the same lack and corruption."

Cf. Appendix IV: A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles, Section V, "Original Sin."

For documentation of the professors' views on this subject, see below:

Documentation

Prof. B Transcript

pp. 15-16

COMMITTEE: In connection with Genesis 1, 2, and 3, can one then talk about the image of God in Genesis 1 and then go to Genesis 3 and see there, as the Confessions point out, the image lost and so on and make that a connection in terms of the fall?

PROF. B: I hold that the connection of the image of God and the fall is a truth that God brought out through St. Paul in the New Testament and that up to St. Paul's time the image of God was simply used to distinguish man from all the rest of the creature world. The image of God was not associated with innocence or guilt in the Old Testament. It was only in the Pauline texts of the New Testament that the *imago*, or the εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ, the image of God, was associated with something in man's ethical circumstances. The Confessions are interpreting Genesis 3 in the light of the Pauline theology of the image of God, and I would concur in this. But I do not think that at the level of Genesis 1, 2, 3 you will find anyone in the Old Testament who says, when Eve took of the fruit, that she thereby lost the image. There is no Old Testament text that says that.

Prof. J Transcript

pp. 11-13

COMMITTEE: I have one from the Smalcald Articles here. I guess this is related to what you are talking about, where it says here we must confess, as Paul says in Romans 5:11, that sin originated and entered the world from one man, Adam, by whose disobedience all men were made sinners and subject to death and the devil; this is called original or capital sin. That far the quotation. I think what Paul is asking is whether I am bound to accept on this basis the fact that there was one man, that there was a fall, and that original sin is that which we now inherit from him.

PROF. J: Well, since your purpose as I understand it is to find out what I believe, teach, and confess, I would stand committed precisely to that statement of the Smalcald Articles. This is what I believe, teach, and confess.

COMMITTEE: Let me give you another one. The Formula of Concord, Tappert [page] 510, it is Article I, Original Sin,

paragraph 9-10. "That this inherited damage is the reason why all of us, because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve, are in God's disfavor and the children of wrath by nature, as Paul says (in Romans 5:12). Furthermore, that original sin is a complete lack or absence of the original concreated righteousness of paradise or the image of God according to which man was originally created in true holiness and righteousness" [That is pretty close to what I was quoting], "together with a disability and ineptitude as far as things of God are concerned and as the Latin words put it, 'The description of original sin denies to unrenewed human nature the gifts and the power, the faculty and the concrete acts, to begin and to effect anything of spiritual affairs.'" Now the teaching here that man was originally created in true holiness and righteousness and then the idea that because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve are in God's disfavor and children of wrath by nature and this inherited damage—am I at liberty as a Lutheran (and we are interested not only, Prof. J, in what you believe personally, but in what you believe a Lutheran theologian may legitimately hold without passing judgment on anybody; we are interested in your position) is there any part of that section that I can delete and still be faithful to my confessional subscription?

PROF. J: A word like "delete" I would not certainly want to admit. I would in looking at this particular passage and its context see that what the whole point of this particular statement is is to affirm the impotence of the unborn human being to reconcile himself to God. I do not think that the symbols are particularly interested in an explanation of how the individual is in this condition in which he finds himself at the present time. I think that the point of it is within the framework of the discussion that had gone on, the Solid Declaration as a part of the Formula of Concord is concerned primarily with actual controversies that had gone on, and it takes the *status controversiae* from that, that within the framework of the argumentation it stresses that the human being does not have any kind of intrinsic power, apart from the gift of the Holy Spirit, by which he can make himself acceptable to God. It seems to me that this is the, if you will, the *Lehrinhalt* ["doctrinal content"] of this particular passage.

COMMITTEE: You say you are not interested in giving an explanation. It seems to me this is exactly what they are doing. They are saying "because," "which is why all of us," "the reason why"—that is explanation, isn't it? The disobedience of Adam and Eve, isn't this an explanatory statement? This is the reason why, and then furthermore they mention that according to which man was originally created.

PROF. J: I think that what you have here in paragraph one [this is 9 according to the marginal numbering] is a description, and the sentence, the subsidiary sentence begins: *Dass wir allesamt vonwegen die Ungehorsams Adam und Evä*, and so forth. They are describing the situation as the human being is.

COMMITTEE: And they are saying why it is, are they not? How we came into this state? Are they not tracing it back?

PROF. J: They are saying that this is something which goes back, goes back to the very beginning of *Homo sapiens*, and with this I would find myself in complete agreement.

COMMITTEE: Did I understand you correctly to say that because of the . . . (?) was that you were looking at it in the light of the controversy that if it isn't germane to their purpose, that you might not be held . . . ?

PROF. J: No. I think this explains why you have particular words and particular formulations that are used. And I do not think that in every case the use of a particular formulation, taken out of one side or the other of the controversy that they are trying to assuage, necessarily is the way in which this ought ideally or most appropriately to be said. In other words there is a considerable amount of theological construction in paragraph ten, the second of the questions [sections] that you read, for which you would really be hard put to find adequate Biblical documentation.

COMMITTEE: In paragraph ten?

PROF. J: Yes.

COMMITTEE: Would you give us—

PROF. J: Yes. "The lack of the concreated, inherited righteousness in paradise," which interestingly enough is in quotation marks, is the kind of thing which represents a theological reflection upon the Biblical data. *Oder des Bildes Gottes*, where again you are dealing with a term which is Biblical but with a category which as far as its content is concerned is theological. I would be ready to defend the thesis that we do not have the category "image of God" in the Old Testament. You have an *εικὼν* doctrine in the New Testament, but I think in the Old Testament you have something else. And as a result then you are operating with a set of theological assumptions, theologically articulated assumptions, that do not necessarily represent the ideal or the best or the most perfect way of asserting something of this kind.

Prof. A Transcript

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COMMITTEE: But with those conditions, you can say then, and it's possible, that the event described in Genesis 3, the fall, between a man and a woman, never really took place as described?

PROF. A: I wouldn't want to say that the fall never really took place. Even if you add the—even with all of the other—

COMMITTEE: As described.

PROF. A: I find it difficult to imagine a situation in which I would feel happy with saying that, because the basic point, when I read Genesis 3, I don't say now, "Did this happen or didn't it?" It seems to me I look at that and immediately say, "Yes, this is talking about man," and I don't get the feeling that it really didn't happen that way. I get feelings, this is yes.

COMMITTEE: Prof. A, please believe us when we say that we are not a debating society on the committee, we're not a jury, and we're not judging you, said it so often already. But what do you then do with a New Testament passage which clearly states that it was not the man who was first the tempted, but it was the woman, and that there must be some historical event that took place whereby the woman led the man into the same disobedience into which she had

fallen? Now you say, "Let me see whether I get you clearly, that the important message of that chapter is the fall into sin, that it could have taken place in a different way than described by a tree of fruit, a prohibition and the violation of that prohibition." Do I get you clearly that it could have happened in a different way? I'm not debating the issue; I'm merely trying to get your viewpoint.

PROF. A: Genesis 3 is saying God made man right. Man's problem is his own, it is his own making, he is a rebel. That I affirm. Pardon?

COMMITTEE: It says more than that. The New Testament says it says more than that. The New Testament says it was not the man who fell first, but it was the woman and that through that, whatever the fall was, now, whatever the act of disobedience or rebellion against God was, for me it is a lot easier to believe the account that there was a tree, than to say to myself, All God wants to tell me is that his present condition is his own fault, and it's his own problem.

PROF. A: My wife says that too; it's much easier to take it straight off, and then I say fine, go ahead; and when I preach it, I preach about this, I don't feel it necessary to make all kinds of historical questions, because I don't think that Scriptures are given basically to—they're given basically to proclaim to us God's will for us and to proclaim to us our need of His grace and of His gracious forgiveness in Jesus Christ, how He has worked out our salvation, and that's the way I basically preach about this.

COMMITTEE: What connection does this have, though, with the confessional commitment, just quoting from the New York resolution, which just happens to state it succinctly, one of the whereases: "Whereas the Scriptures teach and our Lutheran Confessions affirm that the fall of our first parents is a historical fact, (quote) 'which corrupted God's handiwork in Adam,' [that's from the Formula of Concord, and the Smalcald Articles and so on, also Romans 5:12-21, 1 Cor. 15:21-22,] thus bringing sin into the world so that 'since the fall of Adam all men who are propagated according to nature are born in sin,' [that's from the Augsburg II,] and 'we must confess [begin quoting] what St. Paul says in Romans 5:12, namely, that sin had its origin in one man, Adam, through whose disobedience all men were made sinners and became subject to death and the devil.'" That's from the Smalcald Articles, III and I. Do you feel bound to that statement?

PROF. A: Well, if I remember correctly, I think it also reports that there was an amendment moved that the teachers at our schools be required to teach this.

COMMITTEE: I'm sorry. May I clarify. I'm not talking about do you feel bound to New York convention, just to these quotes out of the Confessions, that's the only reason I'm reading them, just happen to have them, in a compact spot. I'm talking just about the Confessions; I'm not talking about the New York Convention.

PROF. A: . . . Yes, sir, the doctrinal content I do feel, I happily have pledged and try to fulfill that I teach in accordance with them.

COMMITTEE: So you would then feel bound to say that sin had its origin in one man, Adam, that's Smalcald Articles quote, direct quote.

PROF. A: I would say, sir, that I believe it is possible and it is not contrary the articles of faith to hold that the specific nature and the manner in which this happened, through one man or however, is—how did I start that sentence? That this particular part is not necessarily part of the article of faith. I tend to think that it's much easier to think that there was one person, that there was two parents, personally, a pious opinion, I don't know that that is necessarily absolutely required by an honest reading of the text, and therefore I would say that if a person, like myself, feels that this is possibly an exegetical question, I would say, let's not make it hypothetical, I'll just talk about myself, I think that can come under the rubric of exegetical opinion. But it's one that one ought to think long and hard about, and indeed I tell my students that if you are going to say that Genesis 3 is not intended to, you know, to describe how it happened, you'd better ask yourself the question about fall and salvation, atonement.

COMMITTEE: Whatever you may do with the exegesis of

Genesis 3 though, the confessional statement is not an exegetical treatment; it's a dogmatic statement that sin entered by one man, Adam. Now how do you square *quia* subscription, in saying that this isn't necessary to believe that it happened by one man or whatever?

PROF. A: Well, I would say I have my — that the *norma normans* is the Scripture and that what I am convinced is the doctrine, the article of faith that God teaches there, that I am convinced is there, that gives me the clue to what in the Confessions is doctrinal and what I am convinced is not clearly taught and intended as doctrine in the Scripture is not exegetical, and I firmly, and I do not see how any article of faith is in question here, if I hold that God created man perfect, that man has himself sinned, and thus fallen into sin and that all of us now have original sin, and are born losers because of that, and I need the salvation that comes only in Jesus Christ, I do not understand, I don't understand how this contravenes the articles of faith, and I would, because I believe that, I would allow the freedom of, I think that freedom ought to be allowed to that, but I certainly don't want to, I don't want to be, and I would never so teach this or would so talk about this in any way that would make anyone cause to doubt what they themselves think is crucial.

COMMITTEE: A man could claim *quia* subscription though without affirming one man, Adam, and what would you do then with Romans 5?

PROF. A: Romans 5, I think the emphasis there is on Paul trying to make the point that all men are saved through one man Jesus Christ. And I think he takes the surface meaning of Genesis and draws this parallel to show how it fits and to urge to this point that Jesus, that all men are saved in Jesus Christ, and —

COMMITTEE: We are not bound by Romans 5 then —

PROF. A: We're absolutely bound by Romans 5, yes, sir.

COMMITTEE: No, no, let me finish the question that —

PROF. A: Pardon me, I'm sorry.

COMMITTEE: We're not bound by Romans 5 then to accept or to believe that there was necessarily one man Adam inasmuch as his purpose is otherwise, only to point to Christ, we're not bound by that passage to accept one man Adam, is that what you said, I thought.

PROF. A: I don't think that passage alone indicates this because I would say the basic passage, that there are other passages that deal with this, there is one other, and I think that one is, I may change my mind some day.

Prof. P Transcript

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COMMITTEE: The one question that I have, you have that lovely picture of Jesus as Representative of the Second Adam, you know, in there. Would you consider it then, because you made so much of that Romans 5 — absolutely basic not only to your belief but to a good Lutheran Christian belief to accept the fact that there was a person by the name of Adam as the first man?

PROF. P: No, I will say frankly not. The Adam language is typological language, and how necessary the historicity of Adam is to the validity of that typology I don't know. Adam, we all know, means man.

COMMITTEE: What do you think Paul meant there? To Paul what did it mean, talking about Adam, first sin, and so forth?

PROF. P: What are you asking me? I know what it says in the text

COMMITTEE: I am asking you how Paul, as he develops it in Romans 5, is thinking of a man, a historical man Adam, who of course means humanity but who in Genesis is given an identity as an individual, who elsewhere is given an identity as an individual. Is Paul thinking of an individual, or is he thinking of all humankind? In which case, if he is thinking of all humankind, what does this do to the concept of original sin?

PROF. P: Yes, he opened up the door, didn't he?

COMMITTEE: Sorry about that.

PROF. P: Well, really there are vast exegetical questions there and large systematic questions. And they are issues that I have been concerned with and upon which I have not reached answers that satisfy me completely. But you do deserve one straight answer. As far as I can tell, Paul being a man of the year 30 or 40 A.D., probably believed that Adam was a historical character.

Prof. R Transcript

pp. 13-14

COMMITTEE: Do you think that Adam and Eve and the reality of an honest-to-goodness fall can be considered an exegetical question in the Confessions and a person would not need to include them under this *quia* subscription?

PROF. R: Yes, I think so. I think they can, although I think we are probably talking about two separate things here. I don't really think that the hazard that a man experiences who has difficulty affirming a real Adam and Eve, at least the theological hazard is the kind of threat that he might feel from the evolutionary sciences — say from anthropology or something like that. I think it might be a moral hazard. It is not just the question of sin being bequeathed by generation from parents to children. The people in the evolutionary sciences that I know of wouldn't have any great difficulty with that. At least some evolutionary views of men that I know would be quite willing to say that people are not all born the same, some people are born with two strikes against them as they are born. Some people are worse off than others, and they are worse off because of what they inherited. I think the real objection theologically, morally, that a noble pagan might experience with this — and so might Christians, who are also to some extent noble pagans — is that God judges them and holds them guilty for things which they inherit. I think that is where the scandal comes in.

COMMITTEE: I am not quite clear in connection with your answer to the previous question though. As I understand, you believe that your confessional subscription you feel includes Adam and Eve, original image-of-God creation and so on, and real fall, but you don't think that is necessarily so for somebody else. In other words, if he says, "Well, I think I am going to put that under the question of exegesis," he may properly do so. Am I understanding you right?

PROF. R: Yes. Now I would add then (to catch the point of your question, when you say it could be an exegetical question) — I betray my systematic prejudice, I suppose, when I say — I don't think there is any such thing as a purely exegetical question. I think, if it is a real serious question of exegesis, that the reason a man has a question (and I might be that man) is that it also has systematic implications for the rest of the faith for him. So if he says, "Well, for me this is a serious exegetical question," then I would have to counter by asking as his brother, I would say: "Well, before I would even either approve or disapprove what you are doing, I would much prefer to ask you first off, Why is it a problem for you?" And I might find, as I often have, I might find that the problem is a problem which I couldn't solve for this man simply by saying that you have to believe this, it is in the Scriptures. He might have a very apparently "Christian reason" for demurring at first. And so in the course of working this problem out — for example, that God would pass judgment on a newborn sinner on the strength of what he himself had no responsibility in perpetrating upon himself — then there are other larger questions which are not just textual questions that have to be sweated out with this man. The whole question between God's judgment and God's mercy. So that's why I wouldn't cut that distinction nearly so sharply between what I might call systematic and exegetical questions.

Prof. B Transcript

pp. 19-21

PROF. B: In the last 8 or 10 years I have been quoted quite often in connection with this matter of evolution, and I want to say right at the start that if the issue between evolution and creation is black and white, then I am 100 percent on the side of creation, and I would say evolution just has to go by the board. But I find from my contact in recent years

with Jesuits and Dominicans and Presbyterians and others that there are various shades of grey between strict black and white. For instance, our Jesuit scientists here at Saint Louis University and the Dominicans at the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem, all of these men are full-scale supporters of the theory of evolution, and yet they find no problem with it in connection with their faith. If you ask how I reconcile this with my faith, then the answer is that God is the One who put all of these forces of nature to work and from His first creative act such a process of evolution has been in constant operation. I don't like the word theistic evolution, I think creative evolution is better. Whatever word you use here is loaded. It is an evolution that posits God as the prime Creator and the continuing Preserver of the whole world. If that presupposition stands, then I think an evolutionist could find aid comfort in the Christian faith.

COMMITTEE: It is interesting in mentioning the Catholics that your Catholic friends must ignore a papal encyclical, *Humani generis*, which says quite explicitly that there is a reference to one set of parents and there must be something special in any theory about man's development. But let me ask you this. If I read you right, you believe it is a legitimate interpretation of Scripture to accept theistic evolution, the origin of man from a lower form of life. Do I understand you correctly? God directed the process but nevertheless that man at one time was not man, he was anthropoid, at one time prior to that a reptile, at one time prior to that a worm, etc.? Is that your position that that is legitimate and Biblical?

PROF. B: I think one can say that God created all forms of life. Even in terms of the hexaemeron in Genesis 1 one can say that last of all God created the human organism. How that last of all creatures came to be, I don't know, but it certainly accords with what many men say, that after this subhuman organism had gone on for who knows how long, then *Homo sapiens* was brought into being. I must grant, to me this is the big difficulty to get from a subhuman being to *Homo sapiens*. The answer is that it is the image of God which makes the difference. There are Roman Catholic theologians who say that the selection of man was one of the earliest forms of covenant. This Biblical word is used to indicate that God chose one species and made a particular covenant with that species and implanted His image into it and made it *Homo sapiens*. This is a pretty bold leap. I think it is as close as any Christian evolutionist has come to answering that problem.

COMMITTEE: I take it, sir, in the interest of your position that you are saying yes to my question, that you believe it is a viable option to accept theistic evolution?

Prof. B Transcript

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PROF. B: I would rather express it with another phrase than theistic evolution because that's become so loaded.

COMMITTEE: Well, you talked in terms of creative evolution; theistic evolution means it is evolution directed by God. The opposite of theistic evolution is atheistic, and I don't think we are talking about that.

PROF. B: The opposite of theistic evolution is a fully un-theologized evolution. As the scientist who has — well, yes, then I would agree, yes.

COMMITTEE: O.K. This apparently means then that you are not in support of the insistence of the Synod at the New York convention, where it spoke quite firmly in terms of Adam and Eve being our first parents and so forth, and being specially created. I am sure you are acquainted with that resolution.

PROF. B: I don't think that this necessarily is in conflict with the convention resolution, because I clearly indicated the point must come where God intervenes in the process which He himself started and by a special manipulation puts His image into these two people.

COMMITTEE: So you are saying that out of the mass of apelike creatures running around God picked two and called them Adam and Eve and then it takes off from there?

PROF. B: This is right; He chose a segment of that earlier creation and made it into the human race, right.

COMMITTEE: Now in terms of the atheistic, I mean the evolu-

tionistic philosophy of the law of tooth and fang and that man's concept developed in terms of what is right and what is wrong and his concept of conscience and even his concept of God, this all developed as man developed along up the pathway toward *Homo sapiens* and after he was *Homo sapiens* these things came as part of this evolutionary process, his religion evolving, his morals evolving. Do you believe that that is an acceptable position, or do you think that when God picked these two apelike creatures or just crossed the threshold and said, "You are Adam and you are Eve," that He endowed them then with what Paul calls righteousness and true holiness, or how do you deal with the problem?

PROF. B: I think with the implantation of the image of God man was given the potential to receive God's revelation, and at that point the training process began. God came to this man and said, "This is My will," and this man reacted to it according to the account that is developed from Genesis 2 on.

COMMITTEE: How do you put the fall in there? Genesis 3.

PROF. B: Here we face a problem which the Bible simply does not answer. God created this human race as good, and yet it fell into sin, and we can't explain how that happened.

Prof. S Transcript

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COMMITTEE: Well, this has often bothered me, and I don't know whether you are ready to pronounce on it or not. Is it possible, on the one hand, that a quasi theological equation Romans 5 you have an individual, definite historical figure Jesus Christ and then over here Adam. Now does that mean, can this kind of equation be a historical figure here and a symbolical figure here? Or if this is a historical figure, this Christ, must Adam also be literally historical?

PROF. S: I don't think so. I don't think it follows. You have to get the point why this thing just I am not so sure, in fact, I am quite sure I don't know whether the fact that the Lord used Job for instance as an example of something whether that was Job as a person has to be living whether the whole thing might not be a parable. Or let me give you just as we do this constantly, you know, you talk about Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, whether she did this and she did that, as Lady Macbeth did this, so our Lord did the opposite. That doesn't mean Lady Macbeth lived, but it is a picture, it conveys an idea which is a contrast to our Lord.

Prof. S Transcript

pp. 27-28

PROF. S: You see there you have a technicality. Theistic evolution, as you well know, is a contradiction in terms, isn't it?

COMMITTEE: No, it isn't.

PROF. S: Well, my picture is, evolution is something that deals with hard facts, and then you talk about theistic, you are not in scientific facts anymore, you are in the area of faith. To me that always seems to be a sort of evasion when you talk about theistic evolution. That is a wedding of two men, if anything. It is not a normal thing.

COMMITTEE: An evolutionist is an individual who said there was not a special creation, and all living things came from some original life form, some cell, which originally came into existence, and that all things developed from that. Theistic, as the word implies, is that it is God's direction.

PROF. S: I know what you mean. I think this term is already a weak one because I don't think science as science deals with God, and I think this is a sort of hybrid word. I do believe, just as I have told you, that a Christian certainly could believe that God in His infinite wisdom created the world over a period of tremendous years, through development, and maybe this is even alluded to in Genesis 2, where God, you know, speaks of out of the waters these things were drawn. But it was God who did it, it isn't an accident. It isn't something that God set in action and let the thing go. It's God developing, following it every step of the way.

COMMITTEE: We are not talking about atheism or deism, but we are talking about the evolution; this is tied in very obviously with the doctrine of original sin. How could I as an evolutionist, if I believed that man came into existence as an animal form that finally became human, how could I

properly teach the doctrine of original sin, which says man was created in righteousness and true holiness and then fell?

PROF. S: Well, I would think that somewhere along the line God would have declared this person as a human being. How He did it, you know, you are always getting into the how, and I don't think, I am always in trouble when I try to explain a miracle because I am a rationalist. I do know that God created man; how He did it I am not interested in that; with Luther I say, "God made me and all creatures." I know that somewhere along the line man rebelled and fell into sin, and for that he was under God's wrath. Now how and when and all of that I think is immaterial. There it is. You know when a man has got cancer I don't sit there and worry about how it developed or how it got to be cancer. My job is to try to save this guy or at least prepare him for his death.

COMMITTEE: But you are implying then (am I correct? I want to be sure that I do not misunderstand you) that I could take an evolutionist position and from your point of view, this would not disqualify me as a faculty member.

PROF. S: I don't like the word evolution because—

COMMITTEE: Well, what you have described.

PROF. S: O.K. If you want to use what I described, yes.

Prof. T Transcript

pp. 5-7

COMMITTEE: O.K. I would like to follow it up if I may with another one. Who determines then or what and on what basis whether this has a direct tie-in with the Gospel in the event that I look at the Scriptures on original sin or the Confessions on original sin and I am convinced that this does not affect my faith, whether I accept this doctrine or not, because I am willing to admit that I am in trouble and I need a Savior, that I can be saved only by grace. You are convinced that because this is not only in the Scriptures but that you feel it is directly tied to salvation to accept the doctrine of original sin the who becomes or what becomes the arbiter and how do we determine whether something really destroys or is at the heart of the Gospel violates the truth of the Gospel or something?

PROF. T: How do you determine it? Well, you sure don't determine it by quoting a Bible passage, because that is what Melancthon and the confutators were sort of bombarding each other with, and you know neither side convinced the other on this particular point. My own perspective would be that the article on original sin early in the Augsburg Confession is indeed one of the necessary spokes of this wheel I am talking about, and the Roman theologians of the early 16th century would say the same thing, but what the Lutherans criticized them about is to say, that is, they do not say, "Gee, we rejoice in that you Romans have a doctrine of original sin, that you don't fight the doctrine of original sin," but they say, "You guys accept the doctrine of original sin, but you know we can't go along with you on that because the Gospel gets lost in the way you finally spell out that; and the issue is not: Do you accept the doctrine or don't you? but: How does it relate to the center?" Now the only way that that can be found out or checked out is, you know, to get together and talk about it or lay it out on the table and both of them to be sure using, you know, the Scriptures and all the resources they want and finally the compelling nature of whether or not, you know, Melancthon convinces Campeggio or one of the other guys depends on, in this case, I suppose, the weight of the argument on how the picture is painted that a guy can see sure enough if I am really to hold to the Gospel of Jesus Christ I really can't take a Roman notion of original sin. I have to take the one that the Augsburg Confession spells out.

COMMITTEE: Suppose when this dialog is all done and well and we have met as brothers I am still just as convinced that this has no bearing on destroying my faith or my proclamation of the Gospel, does it become an adiaphoron?

PROF. T: No, but at the moment I just say, well, I was helpless to convince you to see that and since there is no you know on this one especially we are in technical trouble because there is no Bible passage that mentions original sin, you know that is a technical term that was brought into the Christian conversations early. I think Augustine perhaps is the first guy to use it, and therefore I can only give you

an interpretation of Biblical passages to try to convince you that original sin is what is really being discussed there.

COMMITTEE: Now suppose taking that for granted you know that you have this whole corpus of that particular doctrine, call it what you will, he says he doesn't like that central of the Gospel as he sees it. As a Lutheran pastor and a District president, now, is he free to proclaim that, to teach that, or is he bound as a Lutheran under the Confessions to accept the doctrine of original sin even though he doesn't think he can relate it to the Gospel? You think he can, but he thinks he can't. On that basis, by that rubric can he say, "O.K. I am free of this and I need not proclaim it"?

PROF. T: Well, when you start talking about what does a man do on Sunday morning pulpit, proclaim, preach, the key words. Then we don't really, I suspect you don't either really preach a sermon where the subject, you know, for twenty minutes this morning is the doctrine of original sin and my goal is to have you people parishioners go out of this thing convinced that original sin is accurate and I am an original sinner of course. But the thrust is whenever we are talking about preaching, then we have to remember these technically the one and only thing we are mandated by the Lord to preach and that is the word of the cross of Jesus Christ, Him crucified, or pick whatever New Testament sort of summary phrase you want, and therefore whatever I say about any one of the spokes in a given Sunday sermon at least has to be so said that the hub is what the parishioner finally goes away with because the hub is the only thing that would give him the resources to live today and on through the week until next Sunday or until the next time he does indeed encounter the means of grace. I would have to see I guess an individual case of a guy who says I don't accept the doctrine of original sin and have him lay out for me what that means in his wheel, and if I could see that somehow or other what he thinks he is denying is in no way affecting the hub, then on the basis of my Lutheran confessional understanding I don't have any, you know, judgment to lay upon him. What little I know of the general kind of gripe about original sin that I get often from students, undergraduates at Valpo, many from, you know, your parishes or your college, was a non-Lutheran notion of what original sin is, and that is what they were rejecting, and so what I had to teach them is to see what is being affirmed when Lutherans talk about original sin, how that does really relate to the hub and in, you know, large numbers of cases that they became "believers" in original sin again, and they confessed to that, and they said I can see why that is consistent if the Gospel is really what it is, then the previous state of man without the Gospel is indeed validly described as original sinner.

COMMITTEE: Do I understand you then to be saying that really it is your insight that becomes the determining factor as far as your judgment is concerned? You said if I feel that the end I would probably say, Well, O.K."

PROF. T: Excuse me, I'm sorry, I feel then that was with reference to this hypothetical situation of this brother which I suppose we probably shouldn't even have engaged in at all until we could get someone up here and say, "O.K. You are one who denies original sin or can't accept it," you know. Tell me what it is that you think you can't accept because we have been dealing in this hypothetical situation and I have been giving sort of hypothetical answers. But the principle at least that I would be working with is not to say I have to convince this guy that original sin, he has to accept the doctrine. I would think that with reference to brother I have to do that fraternal thing and that is to help him see how if indeed an important spoke is missing in his wheel, how to be consistent in his own commitment to the center and the confessional commitment, by golly, he wants to get this spoke back in, and if he has it pulled out, I know what the reasons are.

COMMITTEE: But if he has it pulled out and persists in having it out, I think your basic question is, Can he continue to function in his office as a Christian pastor in the Lutheran Church? In other words, does his confessional commitment insist then and implement this that that spoke has to be in?

PROF. T: The language of spoke is my picture. I would go along with what the Confessions say in their damnations on that article too, that those things which the Confessions

condemn, those kinds of positions on sin a man can't hold. Now once more once this hypothetical character we have: if he in rejecting original sin is opting for one of those positions condemned, then I would say he has in effect put himself outside of that confessional commitment.

Prof. XX

The Fact Finding Committee also calls attention to the book *The Form and Meaning of the Fall Narrative*, 1965. Interested parties may see the book itself for more complete information.

The author indicates that he is offering a tentative position and not proposing a final answer.

Prof. XX does not regard Genesis 2-3 as mythological or legendary. On the other hand, he also repudiates any efforts to harmonize these chapters with modern science. He does not believe Genesis 2-3 is to be taken literally. Instead, it is to be regarded as "symbolic religious history."

Because Prof. XX rejects the literal interpretation of Genesis 2-3, he does not regard the snake that tempted Eve as a real snake. Rather it is a symbol of temptation. Nor does he believe that the evidence of the Old Testament

demands that Satan was the tempter through the snake or even that Satan need be regarded as the ultimate source of evil. He recognizes that the New Testament makes this connection but doesn't believe that it is necessary to conclude that this was true of the ancient Israelites.

Prof. XX also considers the trees of the garden of Eden, the cherubim, and the flaming sword to be symbolical.

He also rejects the traditional interpretation of Genesis as the first Gospel passage. It is instead an enmity oracle. There is grace in Genesis, but it is not pointing to Christ. The grace consists in God's kind and merciful dealing with Adam and Eve. (Contrast the position of Lutheran Confession, *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, Article XII, 53-55)

Prof. XX's position is that Moses did not write Genesis 2-3. Instead it was a writer who wrote centuries later. On the basis that miracles should not be multiplied, Prof. XX believes that the writer received no special revelation but simply operated with the traditions of the fall of man current in his day.

Prof. XX says that the fall is "more than historical." Something happened, but we cannot tell what it actually was. He believes that we are really dealing with religious symbolism and drama.

5f, 4. Permissiveness: The Virgin Birth of Christ

No evidence was found by the committee to indicate that the deity of Christ is not accepted and taught. However, several men expressed views concerning the virgin birth of Christ which fall short of condemning as false doctrine the denial of the real, historical event of the virgin birth as a biological miracle. The transcripts indicate that some members of the faculty would not label denial of the historical virgin birth as false doctrine unless this denial involved a denial of the deity of Christ or hurt the Gospel. There is in fact a reluctance in these cases to pronounce an adverse judgment on the denial of the virgin birth. There is also a tendency to talk of the virgin birth in theological terms without affirming faith in a historical (biological) virgin birth. This methodology apparently involves acceptance of the non-confessional notion that faith can be separated from the historical events proclaimed by the Scriptures.

Cf. Appendix IV: *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, Section IV, F, 9, "The Infallibility of Scripture."

For documentation of these findings see the following transcripts of interviews:

Documentation

Prof. P. Transcript

pp. 23-24

COMMITTEE: O.K., I think we have our answer on that. I think we have time just for a couple more questions. On this emphasizing the Gospel as norm in the sense that you use it in your essay, if I take the approach as I look at the doctrines of Scripture that the things which I really am held to which have prime authority, are those things which I can somehow directly relate to the importance of the Christ event, and if then I come to the point where I say relative to the virgin birth that I can conceive of it that Christ may have been produced sinless without the virgin birth, that I can conceive of it as entirely possible that the particular job somehow in His ministry, His total ministry, could have been effected without the virgin birth, and if I on that basis say then that I do not regard the virgin birth as essential for Christian belief, perhaps I feel that it is in there because the Septuagint misinterpreted Isaiah 7 and used the word *παρθένος* and Matthew carries it through, and on that basis I decide that as I apply my exegetical work and so forth that it very possibly midrash or something like that and it need not be an essential part for me as a Christian to believe.

What would be your reaction to that, your evaluation of that? Would that be a proper way to apply this concept of the Gospel as being central norm in terms of our exegesis, and so on?

PROF. P: I should think not. At the beginning I stated that I confess the creed regularly, and one of the things that I confess is that I believe in the virgin birth: "born of the Virgin Mary." If I understood the drift of your question, you are asking me whether I thought it (stenorette tape ran out) whether I consider it legitimate for you to hold that view?

COMMITTEE: Yes, suppose that, well, I am a pastor in Synod, and suppose I come up with this and you were my District president, what would be your attitude over against this?

PROF. P: That is a very "iffy" probability.

COMMITTEE: I think it is distinctly possible.

PROF. P: That I would be your District president?

COMMITTEE: But I think we are talking about the whole here.

PROF. P: Yes. I think I probably have many Christian brothers who have difficulty with the virgin birth as a physical description of what happened in our Lord's coming into the world. When I call them Christian brothers, I think I probably reveal what my personal attitude would be. Now if it would be a Lutheran brother of the Missouri Synod, and if we had any kind of open relationship with one another, I would hope that we could get into conversation on that and that I could understand the grounds for his doubt on this matter. And maybe together we could come to a deeper understanding. If you are asking the legal question, what I would do as District president—I thank God that I don't have that kind of authority.

COMMITTEE: Of course there are those that do and must exercise it, and my question to you basically is: If I were to preach this to my congregation, teaching this to my confirmation kids, in your opinion is this something that I as a Lutheran pastor could do? Could I continue in my ministry? Or if after due admonition, evangelical, pastoral care and so forth I still persist in this, can I continue as a Lutheran pastor in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and deny the physical basis of the virgin birth, translated, as I have said, that it does not refer to a true virgin birth but refers to some, again, theological interpretation which teaches something spiritual and no more than that? In your opinion is this something which the Synod can tolerate, which if you were in a position of responsibility, you would say, "Yes, my son, you can continue to go on and be a pastor and tell these people this," or would you say, "You have to get straightened out on this or else you are out of business"?

PROF. P: I have trouble answering that either yes or no. I think it highly unlikely that somebody who publicly taught that, preached it and taught it, would very long stay in the Missouri Synod. I think his congregation wouldn't tolerate it, because this is a matter of confession. It is a matter of ecumenical confession. I'll say no; it could not be tolerated in the Missouri Synod.

Prof. R Transcript

pp. 14-18

COMMITTEE: Following up on that just a little, you started giving an example with reference to the virgin birth. Now let me tie it in with this. Could I say I think that the virgin birth in Matthew is a midrash and it is a sort of a pious spiritualization which somehow found its way into the New Testament and I still believe that Christ is Redeemer but I cannot believe that the doctrine of the virgin birth? Could I go to the confessions and say that I think that there is then an exegetical question too? After all it is only based on a couple of passages. I understand that as a midrash whereas the confessors took it literally, therefore it is obviously an exegetical question.

PROF. R: Now let me get this straight. What is "an exegetical question"?

COMMITTEE: The virgin birth.

PROF. R: The virgin birth of our Lord. Again I would come back in the same way in which I suggested you come at the other question as "an exegetical question." I would first of all feel an obligation to hear out from a man who had difficulties with this just what his difficulties are with it. If he would say, "Well, I hesitate to affirm the virgin birth of our Lord because there is such scant reference to it in the New Testament," I would say, "Well, ordinarily that is a difficulty, that is worth taking seriously. But do you have any more objections to it than that and particularly if the Matthew reference is particularly, which might limit your New Testament sources even to one, maybe to the somewhat more circumstantial descriptions of our Lord's virgin birth in Luke?" I would say, "O.K., what other difficulties might you have?" Well, maybe he says, "I think the reason Luke elaborates the story of our Lord's virgin birth as fully as he does is due to a mistranslation of Isaiah 7 and that a legend came out of this Septuagintal translation to which Luke then wanted to respond and he wanted to describe our Lord in terms of that legend and that the Christian Gospel is not necessarily bound by that." I would say, "Well, if that is so, that would also be worth taking seriously." But suppose he would say, "Well, I have another objection, and that is that I don't believe that if Jesus was fully human that it is human enough for Him to have been born only of one

parent." Now then, there we are beginning to get into what I would call a somewhat more theological, substantive theological question. Now I think I would want to counter by saying the big question is: What is the function which the doctrine of our Lord's virgin birth—and I would regard this as an "articulation" of the "doctrine of the Gospel"—what is the function which the doctrine of our Lord's virgin birth performs? And that is a little harder to bring off. Is our Lord said to have been "conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary" so that thereby He would be excused from any shadow of coming in the chain of original sin? That has been one solution, one explanation that has been proposed, although there is little Biblical evidence for that. I know of one theologian whom I respect who is supposed to have said to one of his seminars in Germany when tackled on this point, he said: "Es ist einfach biblisch," simply Biblical. I think, going back to our question of before, to relate it to "the clear and pure essential teaching of the Gospel" is still obligatory on us. How can we relate the Luke reference to our Lord's virgin birth to the Gospel? And until we do, we haven't really done the full theological task.

COMMITTEE: Now having done the full theological task, but is that different, or if we can't see how that could be done, going back to this man who says it is simply Biblical and therefore we accept it, is there anything wrong with his answer? Isn't that fundamentally where you start as it is written?

PROF. R: No.

COMMITTEE: That is not what you are saying?

PROF. R: Yes, surely that is where you start. But I was saying no to: "Is there something wrong with that?" I would say that because it is Biblical, this is where you start, that is true. And a man had better have pretty good reasons for dismissing something when it is "einfach biblisch."

COMMITTEE: If it is "einfach biblisch," are there any reasons for dismissing it that can all stand?

PROF. R: No, no. There are no reasons for dismissing it. But I don't think those are the only two alternatives. The question is whether he "believes, teaches, and confesses" it. And why does he believe, teach, and confess it? Finally why he ought to believe, teach, and confess it is because it is integral, it is ingredient to the Gospel. And that is the alternative to dismissing it. The alternative is not simply to say I believe it because it is in the Scriptures, but to say I believe it because it says what it does about Jesus Christ, who is my Lord.

COMMITTEE: Now if a man operating on —

PROF. R: Let me just add this, that the kinds of events which are recorded by the thousands in Scriptures are not to be dismissed. They are asserted, claims are made for them for their facticity, their happenedness, their historicity. But if that is all that we can say in our preaching and our teaching and our confessing, then I would say these accounts are still in limbo, they haven't been assimilated to the kind of proclamation of the Gospel that it is our job as doctors of the church to work out for them.

COMMITTEE: If I can interpose that some turn it around and say, "I will preach the Gospel but because of some of the problems I have with this particular point or that particular point I (and let's stick with the virgin birth, say for scholastic reasons and so forth, and you summarize those), I can't but I still, you know, I really, I see that Gospel there and so forth, but this section is in Scripture, but I simply will not accept it, because here are these scholarly reasons." If a person like that—in your opinion—say he is one of your students—could he be placed as a pastor? He is preaching the Gospel, but he says, "The virgin birth and all this I can't buy because of scholarly reasons."

PROF. R: For me, even though this doesn't seem to be an academic question, for me in my experience it is an academic question. I can conceive, I can well conceive of someone talking this way, but not for very long, as he is exposed to the Biblical material and to the theological task. Now if what the man is saying is this, that there are certain things like the virgin birth which I have not yet succeeded in assimilating to the Gospel, and because I haven't, I am not

going to preach them or teach them to other people, then I would think this man is a very poor steward. If you and I made a case only for those things we have succeeded in relating intimately to the Gospel at its heart, then we would be restricting the congregation of God's people to our own personal theological development. I think we always preach and teach more than we have successfully made our own. That becomes a pastoral concern.

COMMITTEE: What would you think of a statement like this, Prof. R? The belief in Mary's physical virginity is based on the need to translate the mystery of the incarnation into terms intelligible to unsophisticated people.

PROF. R: I will take a flyer on that. I would think as a partial answer I would see nothing wrong with that.

COMMITTEE: What I have in mind is that I think, sometimes —

PROF. R: Now if that is a reductionistic thing, so that that is the only reason for making this — case for Mary's virginity, then I would denounce it.

COMMITTEE: He does say a few other things. He says, "The virgin birth, that rather maladroitness fable." That isn't specifically what I am getting at. What I am trying to get at is this: I believe that very often people suggest that to make the incarnation understandable and intelligible here and perhaps even palatable, the New Testament is somehow latching on to something that was quite current in the Hellenistic world, that somebody was a son of a god or something, and so this was just simply a device that the New Testament took over to make the doctrine of the incarnation more not only understandable but credible. Do you grant that any validity?

PROF. R: No, but I would say beware of the adverbs. You slipped in little words like "just." Is it "just" for that reason? Partially, it might well be. I think God in His wisdom seizes upon things like this that commend His truth to "unsophisticated people." But if you would say, "Therefore, are you saying that she was not in fact a virgin?" that is something else.

COMMITTEE: I believe this is usually what goes together; this was not literally true but was just kind of a teaching device.

PROF. R: That is what I would object to. I don't want to give premature aid and comfort, X. That is why I am stubbornly adhering to I hope a point that is coming through. And that is that I don't like to think, and I wouldn't want my students to think, that as long as I could say that is what it is, take it or leave it whether it has any connection with the incarnation at all or not. That is really selling the Gospel short when we do that.

COMMITTEE: I believe Barth says in his credo that this content and this form are inseparable, we cannot have the one without the other.

PROF. R: The incarnation without the virgin birth? I don't really see that that is the connection, the virgin birth with the incarnation, at least in the Matthew reference.

COMMITTEE: Well, say, the incarnation in its fullness or something, that there would be an impairment of the Biblical witness to the incarnation if the virgin birth goes down the drain.

PROF. R: That is not what I would see being impaired, the incarnation. What I would see being impaired is something else. But now this is perhaps where diversity is allowable. Particularly in the Matthean version. What I see being said with the reference to the *παρθένος* particularly to the Immanuel sign, is called a typically Matthean call to repentance. The God who is the God of the Old Covenant people, who has chosen for His own people a people who turned out to be apostate, who even though He promised them the land, the temple, the city, the kingship, the Davidic dynasty and all the rest, were rebellious and impenitent. And so what does He do when the house of David has been burned out like a stump? He still raises up as if *ex nihilo* His Messiah King, from nothing. This is the way this God, this odd God, goes the way of the cross, raises up His redemptive Regent. And the big accent in the Matthean quoting of the Isaiah 7 accent here is to remind the people of the new covenant, that from this lowly birth-origin God's own Son doesn't need a human father. God will do it His

own way. This is the call for those who trusted, let's say, in paternity or in ethnic prestige, to be ground down under the mills of God and to take God's salvation the way He gives it to them.

Prof. G. Transcript

pp. 27-29

COMMITTEE: Let me sharpen it up. Suppose somebody says on the basis of a form criticism that he thinks that, well, take any story you want, but let's say Christ walking on water. Say I don't think He walked on water really, this is something that was written in by the church in order to show that He is really God and what better way to do it to show that He is a God of nature. And that is really what that means, He is a God of nature, and we are quite sure that although the text is clear and says He walked on water, that really that is something that is written in and not historical, didn't happen. Now is this not a violation of this control here, the authoritative Word is canonical?

PROF. G: Let me first of all affirm that the walking on water presents no problem to me whatever and that I wouldn't take this particular route. Now let me try to defend the guy who may go that route whoever he may be. If I were to find in the literature of that period this kind of story told once or twice or three times, then I in full honesty would have no choice but to ask myself, May this have been a literary device used for a certain purpose? This is not the final answer.

COMMITTEE: Applying that to the virgin birth I am told — and I am not a scholar in that area — that there are parallels Egyptians and Greeks the virgin birth. Well, applying that to the story of the virgin birth, would you then question whether or not that is to be accepted as historical?

PROF. G: I would question that and then would affirm it, but that is where the problem arises. Vergil, as you know, in his Eighth Epilogue something about the divine savior Augustus virgin-born. So (cough) classic example where in non-Christian literature the literary device "virgin-born" is a way of affirming the unique power and heroism of Augustus. Julius Caesar claimed to be son of Venus, I think, built a temple to her somewhere along the line. At any rate they are all doing this. Then in all historical honesty I need to ask myself the question: Is it possible that a Jewish rabbi has picked up this motif and built it into the Gospel? As I wrestle with this question, I am tremendously helped by the ancient tradition of the church, which has always said we have found it desirable, wise, necessary to affirm the virgin birth. I don't know what logical principle that I could use to prove the virgin birth beyond debate. At some point in some way I have to fall back on my faith, my belief.

COMMITTEE: But you wouldn't say it was definitive, going back again to this control, to say that for those who accept and on all the bases you talked about before the word Old and New Testament that this in the canonical Word and Matthew clearly says it and accept it as a matter of faith but I mean —

PROF. G: I would affirm that these words are authoritative for the life of the church. The only question I would ask, and our CTR document says that this kind of study can never be the arbiter of the meaning, it may give clues. The question that could legitimately be asked, I don't have to ask it, I am reasonably simple-minded on many of these things. The question that would have to be asked is what message — as you were saying before about the walking on the water — does the Spirit of God want to convey by the reference to the virgin birth. So I would not, I would have trouble, grave trouble, with a man who would say flatly and absolutely the virgin birth is hogwash.

COMMITTEE: Would you place a student who said that?

PROF. G: I think I would like to work with him.

COMMITTEE: But if he didn't change his mind, could he be graduated in your opinion?

PROF. G: I think that this gentleman would have grave difficulty signing, taking the ordination vow and signing the constitution of Synod.

COMMITTEE: Just a take-off yet on your last statement about the virgin birth where you said the big question is: What

is the truth coming through? And then you said, "If somebody says this is, or X said this is hogwash, or somebody said, what would you do? Now I am not thinking of a fellow who says it is hogwash, because I don't know of anybody who would say that. What about the fellow who says it isn't a biological fact, but the truth certainly is there, that God is doing something very special through the arrival on the scene of this one being Jesus of Nazareth? He is not willing to deny the theological truth but the biological fact.

PROF. G: I can't give you a real clear-cut answer to that, X, because I have no problem with the virgin birth. The fellow who questions the virgin birth I would like to talk with at great length, and I would have to give it more study. As you know, the virgin birth is not affirmed with the earliest creedal affirmations in the New Testament or in the early church. Where it does show up is in the Jewish heretical literature for the first time. They have midwife's testing Mary before and after to make absolutely sure, but this is the literature that the church rejected. So in terms of creedal history the virgin birth has a somewhat different history than "I believe in God the Father Almighty, who created," etc., and I know that you, too, as a pastor want to find out exactly what is going on in this guy's mind and why he reaches the conclusion he does. I am emotionally involved in this issue, and I might not be the best man to help this man.

Prof. X Transcript

pp. 10-12

COMMITTEE: Yes, sir. [Augsburg Confession] Article III, "The Son of God," says that Jesus was born of the virgin Mary with both the divine and the human nature.

PROF. X: O.K.

COMMITTEE: O.K. Are you all right? I am correct that you have no difficulty with that?

PROF. X: That Jesus has both divine and — oh, no, not at all.

COMMITTEE: Now would you tolerate in anyone else and say he could still be within the pale, let's say, of Christianity and Lutheranism if he says that he thinks the virgin birth sort of a midrash and that this is not really anything more than that, and he looks at the text, and on that basis, well, treats it from that fashion? I'm sure you're familiar with that position; many people take it in the world. How would you deal with an individual like that, or how would you evaluate his position?

PROF. X: Well, the first thing I would like to get would be his total position. In other words I'd like to see why. I could understand some intellectual doubt there for say a biologist, Christ is a true man, a true man is a combination of male and female genes and so on. So I would like to know his whole position. And then I would like to know his attitude toward the Word. If he has faith in Christ, then he's going to be loyal to the Word in all its forms, and I would like to know that, so and then if I felt that he had difficulty with this, I would try to talk to him and deal with him —

COMMITTEE: You're talking in the way of dealing, but could —

PROF. X: . . . I'm not in any administrative position, my job would stop with talking —

COMMITTEE: You're talking of a pastoral-brotherly relationship, but what about that individual if you're in a congregation and he's your parishioner, and he says, "Well, pastor, I'm a biologist, and I just can't believe in the virgin birth, but I do believe Christ is God's Son in sort of a general way, but I can't believe that He's really born of a virgin." What would your theological conclusion be then?

PROF. X: My theological conclusion would be that I believe in the virgin birth.

COMMITTEE: But I mean for him, is this something which he could accept and let's say still be a true believer in Christ?

PROF. X: I don't know. Let's say this: You can never tolerate error, you can never tolerate error.

COMMITTEE: Would you call this an error in fundamentals?

PROF. X: This, it depends upon how it would be related. I would say that on the surface it would look like an error

in fundamentals, but if it did not destroy his faith in Christ, this would be your ultimate question.

COMMITTEE: Now suppose he says then that Christ is totally human, because He had a human father and a human mother, and this is all there is to Christ's nature. There is no divine.

PROF. X: Well, Christ is a human being; He is totally human, but He's also divine.

COMMITTEE: Well, say exclusively human.

PROF. X: But not exclusively, not exclusively, that would be error. But I really don't know if this was really brought on by his biology; I would be inclined to have a lot of patience with him, because very often I feel a person believes something which his intellect cannot follow.

COMMITTEE: Well, now, I don't want to belabor this, but I want to be just real sure that I understand you. Do you think it's possible for a person to deny the virgin birth and still believe in the deity of Christ so that He's not only human but He's also the very son of God? Do you think that's possible?

PROF. X: Yes, I would say that's possible.

COMMITTEE: Now, in what way?

PROF. X: I wouldn't say that's possible for me [Yes, X], but I would think of some of the people that Paul met. Now you're asking about possibility, is it possible —?

COMMITTEE: Excuse me, let me clarify. I guess it's possible for a person to believe anything, including pink elephants, but what I mean, is it legitimately possible for a person to take this position as a Lutheran Christian — and basically I guess you can even leave the Lutheran out, just as a Christian — can I believe that Christ had a human father as well as a human mother and still let's say be within the pale of Christianity, or would this affect the whole doctrine of the divine nature of Christ?

PROF. X: Well you used a few words there —

COMMITTEE: Yes, I'm trying to make clear what I meant.

PROF. X: Legitimately, I would say, No, legitimately this is not the right answer, because your testimony of the Scriptures is against that. Whether it is permissible, here again I would feel that you never tolerate any error, just like you never tolerate any sin. You don't tolerate that. Could this fellow still be a Christian? There I would feel that he could be, yes. It would depend upon what was bringing this on. It's — there's a difference between the Reformed approach and the Lutheran approach on these things. In the Reformed approach there is great emphasis on correctness of statement, correctness of intellect, and just yesterday I read in the proceedings of the first Synodical Conference, the statement that the Methodists are very good at getting everything correct as far as Christ's incarnation and His life and so on is concerned. In the Lutheran doctrine the Word is a power, and they point this out. They overlook the power, and that takes me with a miserable intellect, harmed and ruined by sin (and I wouldn't be able to think anything correctly about God as you have it in Second Corinthians), and brings me into a relationship with Christ, and then I begin to grow in grace. Now what, how little the early Christians knew in some cases is apparent when you look at the records. They simply heard the Word, were won for Christ, and came in, and then the Spirit went to work on them, and they began, some at a very low level, in their sanctification.

Prof. D. Transcript

pp. 9-13

COMMITTEE: Let's talk a little about the virgin birth. Sometimes the approach is used that when one deals with the things related in the Scriptures and particularly with emphasis on the central teachings of Scriptures, Gospel of justification by faith in Jesus Christ, the resurrected Savior, that one must insist on those items which can be shown to directly relate to the Christ event and with particular reference to the Gospel, that if something harms the Gospel in any way it cannot be accepted; if on the other hand it does not, then that there may be given perhaps more free play to exegetical variations. On this basis it is sometimes said with reference to the virgin birth that the sinlessness of

Christ, for example, is not contingent necessarily as we look at it, wasn't necessary to have a virgin birth to have a sinless God-man. Hence those who look on the virgin birth as a midrash may indeed accept this as a viable exegetical option. Would you care to comment on that in terms of your position?

PROF. D: Well, first of all I don't really handle this in my teaching. The virgin-birth question is really not a question that comes up in my Old Testament exegesis classes directly. Very definitely we come with the question of what the ultimate intent of Isaiah 7:14 happens to be, and that of course is something related in a way. And there is the problem of the various terms as to whether or not you have the word virgin in the Old Testament or not. But one thing is clear. If you are arguing whether or not God could have produced a sinless Christ, He could have (done or) given birth through His Spirit to a sinless Son anyway He so chose. That is God's power. He is not going to limit His capacity to give birth or produce a Son by virtue of His Holy Spirit in anyone or any way. The question of what is being taught here is another one. But if you are asking whether or not, you know, virgin birth is necessarily contingent upon sinlessness of Christ or that you have to teach it because you want to preserve Christ sinless, that is forcing God into a box.

COMMITTEE: Well, the question really is this, that sometimes people using that approach believe that they can take Matthew's statement concerning the virgin birth and say that this is a theological interpretation, that it is a way of saying something about Christ, but that one need not think in terms of an event of that kind necessarily having taken place. Is that legitimate theology?

PROF. D: Well, first and foremost, as I understand Matthew, it is a theological statement. It has to do with the fact that God is acting in this woman, in some way in which He has not acted in women in the past, in the same sense. There is something unique about the divine act here, and He affirms that in terms of the virgin birth, and I understand Him to be saying precisely that. And in that sense this mystery of the moment, where God works through the Spirit, works in a woman, that simply is not operative in the same way that other women are operative in their process of birth. There is something miraculous, there is something mysterious here. I would affirm it, Yes.

COMMITTEE: Yes, well, that's—my question really is that, obviously the theological is there, but there are those that say that there is a theological thrust only in the literature there, and it is a theological motif without being based on indeed something which in fact did take place.

PROF. D: Well, let's go back to the thing I said before. You cannot in a Lutheran, or within the Biblical tradition, make this kind of neat distinction between theological and history. This is a historical woman. She lives in history, and Matthew would not make that kind of distinction. I mean what we would like to call, you know, purely theological is happening as far as he is concerned in this person, and Jesus is a historical Person, Mary is a historical woman, and the thing is tied to history.

COMMITTEE: Granted we cannot tie God down to the virgin birth; but now if an inspired Matthew so describes it, the sinlessness of Christ, if you will, gets involved in the virgin birth, are we at liberty to detach the fact of sinlessness from the virgin birth, taking a plea on the type of theology that X mentioned before?

PROF. D: Certainly Matthew is making a point about the theological significance of the virgin birth. My question is whether Matthew is making the point about the sinlessness. Is that in the text?

COMMITTEES Well, all right. Whatever it may be the theology that is tied in with the virgin birth, can we, after Matthew has bound his theology together with the virgin birth, ever detach them?

PROF. D: Oh, no, we must assert the significance of the theological point that Matthew is making—

COMMITTEE: —together with the unbending, unyielding affirmation of the virgin birth.

PROF. D: Yes, that is what his theology is and I must assert

and affirm. But I must discern what his theology is, not bring in something that is a presupposition from the outside as to whether or not he is talking about sinlessness. He is talking about the fact that at the beginning of the process there was a mystery with a particular woman at a certain point in time and history and that that is the whole bag of where he wants to go, and this is tied not just to anybody, but to a woman who is the fulfillment of the tradition and of the promises of God, and that through this woman God is setting out His Son as the new Messiah and the new Israel.

COMMITTEE: And if somebody says I can have that theology without the virgin birth, I must say to him nay.

PROF. D: I must discuss that with him, you know, you set up another hypothetical case. I have to talk to that person, I would have to say, "All right, what are you doing here? (Are you) again, "What is the relationship between what you are saying and Matthew's theology? Do you understand Matthew's theology? Do you understand the Gospel? Are you thereby somehow limiting, denying, destroying the Gospel process? (you know). You set up a hypothetical case, and it is a problem! I would have to sit down with the man and find out all the details before I pass any kind of judgment upon him. Just as I hope you are doing with me. Right?

COMMITTEE: I would like to try once more. It seems like we are getting around the point in talking about whether Mary was historical or whether God could do these things, and then we all are agreed on that, but what X's question was quite simply is: Do you believe it legitimate for a person to deny the biological event that is described in Matthew 1?

COMMITTEE: Or let me just tie onto this and put it this way. Do you believe it is legitimate for an individual to say that Christ had a human father?

PROF. D: Well, it is the same question as was asked a moment ago. I would want to know on what grounds they maintain this; I would want to know what is the precise theological position they are holding, you know. Are you asserting, "All right, there was a regular birth between a husband and a wife"? You set up a hypothetical case; I want to know why they assert that fact and whether or not that interpretation that they have in some way limits, harms, or injures the Gospel.

COMMITTEE: Suppose I say this, that I believe that that is a midrash and I believe that it rests on a taking too seriously the παρθένης ("virgin") translation of the Septuagint of the Isaiah 7 passage or the *almah*, and I think that this is the root of it and that in reality it is based on a misunderstanding of Isaiah and that for me exegetical point of view, I think that is the origin of it, and on that basis I simply feel that it is not to be taken as something which indeed took place, and if that is the case, then of course I think it would become obvious that Christ had a human father.

PROF. D: Well, first thing I would say is, if you come at the text and say Matthew misunderstood and Matthew based the whole thing on some kind of concatenation of ideas or some kind of misunderstanding of the original, you really don't give Matthew very much credit. After all Matthew is a significant theologian. He knows what he is doing. He is clear about the process of promise and fulfillment. He is really riding that from beginning to end all the way through, and I would say that Matthew knows what he is doing. He is very much concerned about asserting this and is basing it upon a deeper and richer interpretation of the tradition that is found in the Septuagint and through that to the Old Testament, and by virtue of saying this fulfillment as being greater than the original, he has gotten at the truth of the situation and of God's act. I would certainly not consider Matthew some kind of dilettante who doesn't know what he is doing and thereby base some kind of theology upon him.

COMMITTEE: So you would disagree with my exegetical conclusion; but would you feel that in terms of, say, if I am a pastor in a congregation, that I can teach this exegetical conclusion to my people, or does our Lutheran understanding of Scripture and the Confessions rule this out for me as an option?

PROF. D: As I understand it, if I am teaching this question, our Lutheran tradition would assert the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. And again I would say, if someone came to me

in my congregation as a member of my congregation and had this problem, then I would want to sit down and find out whether or not their rejection of some elements of this tradition was based, on what it was based, and why and how. You know, I would need to talk with them about the whole thing again.

COMMITTEE: We are assuming counseling, but I mean, again I come back now, as a pastor am I free to teach this?

PROF. D: As a pastor are you free to simply ignore the —

COMMITTEE: Say draw this exegetical conclusion, say take the theology of it in terms of saying this points to some wonderful things, I don't think it would really happen.

PROF. D: No, you are not free to take this and ignore the historical dimensions of the event.

COMMITTEE: In your discussion with an individual can you conceive that he would ever have an explanation that would justify his denial of the virgin birth and make it legitimate for him to deny it?

PROF. D: Well, that's, that's facing a whole set of possibilities. I don't know. I would have to listen to what he is saying, I would want to — well, what are all the possibilities, you know? What kind of questions he might raise, what kind of options. That is a bag of, a can of worms.

COMMITTEE: Can he raise any options or possibilities which ever in your thinking justify the denial of the virgin birth?

PROF. D: I would want to hear them. I would want to hear them and on the basis of the tradition of the text be convinced. I am an exegete. I would go to the text and say (you know), What is the evidence. And at this point I don't know. I have not sat down and faced that.

[ADDITION FROM OBSERVATIONS OF PROF. D TO SUMMARY OF HIS INTERVIEW: *The Virgin Birth*: I publicly teach that the virgin birth has both historical and theological dimensions. However, I am not sure that I would a priori exclude a fellow Christian who affirms the incarnation, redemption, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but on certain exegetical grounds has misgivings about the virgin birth per se. This uncertainty of mine is not something which I present in the classroom, but one which I discuss among my peers.]

Prof. T Transcript

pp. 21-29

COMMITTEE: I would like to move on to another topic. You have a memorandum you suggest you gave to us to the exegetical systematic departments dated April 7, 1969, in which again this deals with a hermeneutical approach. It says the Lutheran tradition has sought to do its theologizing with the model of the theology of the cross, and then you go on and you develop the idea we were talking about here. But then you say, "What is God doing? He is stalking His creation as its authorized and authoritative Critic. He is indeed operational and active down here on the ground — too active. Man needs help vis-a-vis God's already operational opus. Needed is not a God who will break into the law of natural causality, or the law of finitude, or even the law of my chronic addition to 'das Vorfindliche' (if that were all that there was to that). No, needed rather is rescue, *soteria* 'from the law of sin and death' inflicted by that very critic." And then you go on and quote a statement in connection with the systematics department. You say it is a statement under discussion:

"Systematic theology consciously and explicitly insists on asking 'Why.' It asks for The Sufficient Reason, The Adequate Basis, The *Fons*, never resting until it has found 'Reason Enough.' Why, for what reason finally, is this or that Christian claim made? By saying that the systematician asks for the 'why,' we're not suggesting that he does not know what it is. On the contrary, because he does know, at least in principle, what that sufficient reason is, his asking is meant chiefly to ask it into clarity, into the full prominence it deserves. He cannot even settle for the explanation, 'Why, because Scripture says so?' He still persists and asks again, 'And why, in turn, does Scripture say so?' His job is done only when he has traced the reason back to The Source: namely, God's reconciling the world unto himself in Christ Jesus — in other words, the gospel."

That is the same position you expounded before. Now in

application here you say: "With the foregoing statement in mind as well as the general remarks about" the theology of the cross, "let us inquire into the problem presented by the virgin birth of Jesus. First of all the necessity question? What necessity do the scriptures themselves find in Jesus' virgin birth? Do they anywhere designate his virgin birth as necessary for anything? For his sinlessness? Although Augustine took this position, it is hard to show that any N.T. writer himself did."

Then you go on and say: "Necessary . . . for *soteria* is not some break in the law of physical causality and natural finitude. Needed is some break-through of the law of sin and death. A naked miracle that breaks through causality and finitude does not yet break through the curse imposed by the critical creator. Is the virgin birth deemed necessary by any Biblical author for this? Not very obviously, as far as I can see."

And then you go on and you talk about the resurrection and say that the resurrection is necessary. But then you say: "I have a hunch that it is this very insight operative in the theologies of many (all?) of the N.T. writers which leads them to give low-key treatment to the virgin birth of our Lord, if they were even aware of it. This is true even of Matthew and Luke despite the coverage they give in their opening chapters. For them it was what they had received, and in their own unique witnessing they included it. But they themselves do not portray it with Easter's kind of necessity. The virgin birth of Jesus does not usher in non-nomological human history, least of all for him! But for the Evangelists the resurrection of the crucified one does indeed do that, for him — and for his." And so on.

Now I am asking, I think, for clarity here. I don't find a statement that finally, for me at least, explicates exactly what you conclude. I feel that there is a rather strong hinting here that if a person is not able to find reason enough or adequate cause and tying this in with the theology of the cross, that it is not really necessary to accept the virgin birth and that that can be then a viable option for a person either to take it or leave it. Now I would appreciate your comments on that.

PROF. T: I think I am going to be a little chary about answering this hypothetical one because now, say, if a person would deny the virgin birth and say all the rest of it, it is my own personal conviction that one could not deny the virgin birth and say all that I say and I think some of that is great stuff, not just because I said it, but that thing I quoted from the department about what systematic theology does as a discipline. That is the why question open up to get to the *fundamentum*, to the *fons*. In my own theology I cannot say the great things about *theologia crucis*, etc., resurrection of Christ without talking about, without confessing the virgin birth of our Lord. What I am doing in many of these paragraphs you read is much more an historical study with — it seems to me patent, although Matthew and Luke give a full chapter or two to the virgin birth, they themselves don't make it fundamental to Jesus being Savior. It is indeed part of, you know, His biography and part of what He is, but what is fundamental is what is at the other end of the book, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. And Paul seemingly, very obviously, you know, follows in that same pattern, and if I remember right, the real enemy that I am fighting with is Bultmann in there, about which I imagine you would rejoice.

COMMITTEE: No, I am a friend of Bultmann.

PROF. T: Well, in that case, you three — for Bultmann for that the issue at stake is not breaking causality which virgin birth presents, but what is needed for salvation is break in the law of sin and death, and there even if you would get a break in physical causality and virgin birth to be sure is that, that doesn't yet rescue me from the law of sin and death, and to that extent at least the virgin birth is secondary as far as you know the soteriological center.

COMMITTEE: Well, don't you find a break in the law of causality and so on equally or even perhaps more so in the physical resurrection of our Lord?

PROF. T: That is true. But what I take here Paul, First Corinthians 15, as my mentor once more reflect till I read that full chapter, the big resurrection chapter; at no place does Paul say break in physical causality, wow, that is what

it is all about, but in fact this law of sin and death stuff I guess that is not a direct quote from First Corinthians 15 but First Corinthians 15 concludes with the sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law, or first off death is the last enemy and the sting of that death is sin, the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory. There Paul, if you will, talks about the—or lays out not the physical causality law that resurrection break but if I can use this term, the moral law of a sinner getting extermination as his fair recompense, and that is what God brings in Jesus Christ, and that is what all the Easter hymns are celebrating, and that is what we celebrate if we stand in that apostolic tradition. Not to deny that that is the break of physical causality, but the big thing is the break in the law of sin and death equation, which is also a very causal one.

COMMITTEE: Scripture speaks of many breaks in causality in creation itself, the initial creation, however you want to take it, it has to be that too, but creation is not redemption. We know that. But when Paul in 1 Cor. 15:12 says: "Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?" And we know the platonic approach and so on. "But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised," etc., etc., your faith is vain, you are yet in your sins. Is he not in fact now combining—he is meeting an argument on the part of the Greeks, who in their theory did not believe in a resurrection, as well as the Sadducees, and he is pointing out that this particular break in causality is a very vital one for the reasons you have already said. But is he not at least phrasing the question of this; I mean, is it not indeed in answer to the fact that there has been a denial of this that prompts him to treat it so extensively?

PROF. T: I would guess that that is the case. I personally don't think that he is speaking to a particular, a self-consciously Greek audience there. My own personal hunch is that these antiresurrection people in First Corinthians 15 are one of those sects that he mentions in the first chapter, one of those clusters that has their own thing going, and apparently for one of these reasons that people who are Christians say we can be Christian and we don't have to accept this, or however I don't know how they put the pieces together, but we are Christian, we are Christ's confessors, but the resurrection isn't part of the picture. And then what Paul has to show, what Paul teaches too in First Corinthians 15 is to say, "Look, kids, if the resurrection isn't part of the picture, then the only thing I have ever been preaching to you is down the tubes; forget it, you know, then nothing has changed. If Christ be not raised, then you are yet in your sins," and that brings back to this what I call moral equation. Then the moral equation of God condemning a sinner and giving a sinner what he has coming to him, then that has not been broken, and you guys will go down the tubes, or you know, down the equation just like everyone else has done, and the payoff of the sinner will be his death, and that is the sting, and that is the clout. The sting of death is sin, and the power that sin has is because God's law operates, the moral law that sinners get recompense.

COMMITTEE: I want to come back to this, but, X, do you want to tie into this?

COMMITTEE: You will have to decide whether I do or not. I am very much interested in what you said about using the word why, asking the question why. In your field you have forever and a day to ask the question why to get to the bottom of things. In the first place you remind me of that theologian you had at Valpo here two weeks ago, the Roman Catholic from Yale or somewhere, and he takes out after some of the Lutherans, you know, and he used this why question, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" How many of them have missed that now you see. He really scolded them. I don't know whether X was there or not, were you? Well that was terrific, wasn't it? Anyway, my question, however, has gotten us into a great deal of trouble, you know; a hundred years ago we asked that *curalii prae alii*. So I suppose that also your department, you can say there are certain limits when you ask the question and then dismiss it because if you pursue you get into who knows where, see. How would you, how do you go about this?

PROF. T: I think I was quoting in both paragraphs that X

read up there a statement that the systematics department had worked out and were discussing. This is three or four years ago, when I was a guest prof down there, and I don't say this more than to say, you know, it is not my statement. I accept that statement. I think that is a very Lutheran way of understanding what the discipline of systematic theology is. This is not saying what is dogma or what is the central dogma, but that is saying this is a Lutheran way of going at the discipline of systematics. I personally think that is one step in a different direction from the Pieper-J. T. Mueller tradition of what one does just when you are doing the job; and it is easy to see this one I think related to—to use my old image of an hour and a half ago—to the wheel because it doesn't say we ask the why question because we are skeptics, but we ask why, what is at the bottom, what is the *fons*, so that the *fons* gets asked into clarity. I suppose I could just flip back to the Erasmus-Luther image about the fountain being the center of town, that the discipline of systematic theology, when viewed this way, says you don't just teach people to recite the articles of the ecumenical creeds and say, "Do you believe them?" If you believe them, then you say, "O.K., we are done with the job" If that were so, the discipline of systematics would be over in about five minutes. But you say: O.K., God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, Jesus Christ, true man, true God, crucified, risen, my Lord, Holy Spirit, work of the church, sacraments, resurrection. What is underneath that, what is the *fundamentum*, how do these things flow from the *fons*? And to act that out into clarity especially for clergymen, so that they can help parishioners see the clarity. It is my own judgment again, historical of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, that we haven't done that for large numbers of our people. The students come to Valpo knowing on justification by faith: "Yes, we have accepted that, Jesus Christ death and resurrection, we accept that, you know, we accept a whole bunch of things, but how on earth do they relate? And above all, how is this *fons*, Christ Himself, central to it?" It is my observation that our tradition hasn't succeeded in doing that well at all. And that is what this definition of systematics could be seen as trying to get at.

COMMITTEE: Because you made your confession of a belief in the virgin birth but rather implied that a question about denying it might be hypothetical, but you are dealing with it right here in this paper when you talk about the typical demyther who denied the physical impossibility of it. Now let's say he doesn't deny the physical impossibility of it but he says, "Since you have mentioned in your paper that it is the virgin birth isn't deemed necessary, at least very obviously, as far as you can see by any Biblical author, in terms of breaking the law of sin and death, I choose in economy of miracles not to accept this." Now am I legitimate, do I have a legitimate thing to do this as far you are concerned?

PROF. T: I don't know how to answer a question when someone says, "Do I have a legitimate right to do that?" You know, I am not your servant, I am not your District president, I am in no authority relationship to you. If I were, then I would indeed have all sorts of legitimate responsibilities, but the first thing would not be to say, since you have accepted the virgin birth, I am going to bomb you over the head.

COMMITTEE: We are not talking about pastoral approach, we are talking about after you have gone through all of this and so forth, if you are District president; after all, you are a professor, and you are teaching these kids who are going to be District presidents, who are going to be counselors and so on, and so I don't think the hypothesis—

COMMITTEE: Let me rephrase it because I think that part of your stature and posture as a theologian is not only what you believe but also what you would consider Scriptural, Biblical, Lutheran, and so forth. Am I correct?

PROF. T: If I understand those terms the way you mean them, yes.

COMMITTEE: Well, I am only asking now whether you could consider this a viable option for a Lutheran theologian to deny the virgin birth in view of the fact that I do not or anyone does not, the person does not consider it necessary for breaking the law of sin and death.

PROF. T: I guess I would have to hear what kind of kerygma he preached when he put that denial of the virgin birth into the mix.

COMMITTEE: You can conceive then of a kerygma he might preach which indeed would enable him to deny this?

PROF. T: I can conceive of a kerygma he could preach without mentioning it. I see, almost even see letter of St. Paul doing that, and you know I am not trying to be smart. I am just saying one has to see what actual effect that has on what a man preaches, and the fact that Paul of Tarsus preached the Gospel with at least not mentioning, it doesn't mean he denied it. It suggests at least that without that being a necessary component a very clear Gospel can still be preached. My own hunch is that someone who denied the virgin birth would really be having other hangups about things that as his pastoral counselor or friend I would want to get out in the open, and my guess is that probably is the *συνδολον*, or *anfechtung* is really someplace else, that it just kind of symptomatically sticks out over here. My experience with in years of teaching and conversation —

COMMITTEE: But suppose it this, and this is not hypothetical. I say that I have—as an individual acquainted with the sciences and so on—I have trouble in general believing that God breaks in causality bit, Bultmann's approach, because I just don't see miracles around me now and I don't see this cause-and-effect relationship being broken. Suppose I say then I simply get down to the point where I am willing to buy one big miracle, say the resurrection, but that is it. But I want to be a preacher in the Synod, I want to continue to be a preacher in the Synod and to teach this to youngsters, say, "You kids are all hung up with this business of science and all of this jazz today. Don't worry about it; because if you find the ax floating in the Old Testament or you find Lazarus being raised, Christ walking on water, the virgin birth—these things can be interpreted theologically, they have a theological message, but in terms of actually having taken place for real, you really don't have to accept it." Now suppose that is my position, and you know as well as I am, and I am not thinking of any of your colleagues in this connection, but you and I can both put labels and names on that position. I am not talking about something that was just pulled out of the air. Now is this legitimate or isn't it in your view, permissible or not?

PROF. T: That word legitimate is the tricky word here, and I guess I am going to pass on that because I don't know what the criterion for looking —

COMMITTEE: Can I be a Lutheran pastor and do this?

PROF. T: This is going to sound equivocating, I suppose, to you, but I would have to hear what kind of Gospel you preach while you were saying no to these other things. Now if these became, you know, the gist of your kerygma, you know, if that is what you ranted and raved on your people, then obviously I would say, not because he has a different *Weltanschauung*, or, you know, world view than I do, but because, by golly, there was 20 minutes and there wasn't a stitch of Gospel in it. I would say that guy, you know, is an illegitimate preacher; at least this Sunday he wasn't legitimate. He didn't even have, he didn't have the legitimization of the Lord of the church himself for what he was doing there that day.

COMMITTEE: Suppose I come through with a beautiful statement on God forgiving everybody their sins and that in Christ we are completely washed clean, everything that we have ever done, everything that we do now, everything we will do, and we stand in a perfect relationship to the Father because of Christ, grace of God —

PROF. T: If anyone after that sermon said, "Man, he has made me see how Jesus Christ is my Lord," I could only say, "X preached the Word of God today."

COMMITTEE: Even though I may have said those other things before that in connection with this and assured them that they don't have to —

PROF. T: You sure would have preached the Word of God, you know, with this little sermon, you just said, regardless of whatever else you put in there. Now if some of these whatever else you put in there as a matter of fact were to undermine the trustworthiness of the Gospel, then that

would have to be seen with the actual effect it had on the people, but we dare not be skeptical about the power of the Word of God as preachment. That is another one of my hobbyhorses—X has more insight on this than I do—that in our Synod we have also a stranded tradition that doesn't really expect the proclamation of the Gospel always at least to work. And that is more shattering to me than lots of other things.

COMMITTEE: What comes through to me in all the discussion about the virgin birth is this: I hear you saying it is all right to deny the virgin birth as long as you are preaching the Gospel. Is that your position?

PROF. T: No. My position, if I had to try and spell it out, is to use technical Lutheran labels. I see the New Testament itself not making virgin birth, faith in the virgin birth *fides salvifica*; it does talk about faith in the virgin birth as *fides historica*.

COMMITTEE: But if you assume now that (excuse me) the question that in order to be determinative for a person's stance they must show a necessity as far as the Christ event is concerned, this would in effect be saying, then, that you don't consider it mandatory to accept it. Now we realize people can preach a sermon on the Gospel without mentioning the virgin birth. I mean that isn't the question. But if your thesis holds that you quoted from systematics that the question always has to be in terms of necessitating Christ or whatever the term was in the last sentence there, and you have said now that the virgin birth doesn't fall in that category, it would seem to me that you would say that this is an option that I might hold without destroying the Gospel, not running around ranting against the virgin birth but simply saying I don't have to accept it.

PROF. T: I don't like the language about accepting. If I have a position, my position is that I see Paul of Tarsus and others preach the Gospel and without making the virgin birth a component of that Gospel. Not that they deny it, but just as a matter of fact it doesn't have that kind of Gospelly necessity as though God really wouldn't have been faithfully redeeming the world through His own Son, the incarnate Logos, if it had not happened that way. As far as I can tell, that is exactly the way it happened, and if someone asked me *fides historica*, "X, what do you believe to have been the event that happened?" I report what Matthew and Luke say.

Prof. XX

To: Exegetical and Systematic Dept. Staffs
Re: Next Wednesday's Joint Meeting of the Two Depts.

Here are my reflections on the subject "Demythologization, *Theologia Crucis*, and Christ's Virgin Birth," to serve as grist for our discussion on Wednesday. If you can read this before then, we won't have to take meeting time to do it.

The need for demythologization is usually specified by calling attention to the fact that the writers of antiquity (Biblical writers included) sought to engage in "God-talk" by using human grammar, logic, and rhetoric for reality-referents that are exterior to man's operational and envisionable universe, exterior to what Bultmann labels "das Vorfindliche, das Verfügbare". The term God in such God-talk is applied to a referent that is viewed as exterior to terrestrial reality. This can be envisioned as temporal exteriority (eschatology-as-time is *totaliter aliter* to normal history-as-time) or as spatial exteriority (the long Western tradition of a super-nature above and qualitatively different from normal nature).

In the language of the scriptures the referent for most (perhaps all) God-talk is not envisioned in this kind of exteriority. Perhaps it is the implicit or explicit presupposition of the creator/creation matrix which renders the biblical authors unreceptive to the above *totaliter aliter* model, since for them the creator/creation matrix of thought does not *separate* the two realities, but intimately *connects* them to each other. In response to the previous paragraph, they tend simply to say: That's not the way it is. God is not *eo ipso* so exterior to the world; the world is not *per se* so god-less.

In the perspective of the first paragraph above it is the exception when God comes into man's sphere—whether that sphere is envisioned as a finite space or a finite time. For the Biblical authors the opposite is the case. For them the

given is that the creator is normally here down on the ground, in, with, and under the components of his creation. The question for them is not: Is he really here or not? And is that even conceivable? but, What is he up to? What *opus* is he doing? Illustrative of this functioning presupposition, it seems to me, is the way Amos presents the upcoming famine of the words of God (8:11 f.) or Paul's way on Mars Hill of presenting his thesis on God's proximity.

The god-referent in the rhetoric of the demythers is the god which Luther designated the subject matter of *theologia gloriae*. Much of the medieval tradition envisioned God as portrayed in the first paragraph above. The *gloria* of that theology which vexed Luther was not merely the distortions of triumphalist ecclesiology or razzle-dazzle divinity, but rather the whole frame of reference that relegated God "by nature" into a *totaliter aliter* realm. It took God in principle out of the world and thereby encouraged man literally to "work out his own salvation", but without "the fear and trembling" which the apostle originally added—added because he saw it and said it "like it really was".

And the way it really was was *theologia crucis*. For Luther this term capsuled the biblical way of talking about God from the very outset. It was not confined to Paul's perspective in I Cor. whence Luther admittedly had gotten his contrasting terms. *Crucis* here to be sure is a reference to Calvary, but an expanding reference. To wit on Good Friday we finally see (if we have been missing it all along before this) what theology is all about, what God is about, what He is up to. In the crucified Christ we see that God acts in creation in contradiction to what men naturally and reasonably expect of Him. What they expect, of course, is cast in some kind of *theologia gloriae*—with a God who is "by nature" extra-terrestrial, a god to whom all the super- and omni-predicates automatically apply. But this is not the "God (who) was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."

Now of course even those theologies whose basic model is a *theologia gloriae* do present the god of their theology getting into the affairs of men and of the world. But that fact itself usually constitutes the central problem for their theology to cope with. Thus it seems to me that the problem of demythologization is built right in to every *theologia gloriae*. It is that theology's central question. Perhaps it is its only question.

Not so *theologia crucis*. Because its model operates with the premise that God is (by definition?) operational in, with, and under his creation, it may not even have to wrestle with the demythologization issue at all—or if so, in a considerably different way. Let's take a look at the issue of the virgin birth of our Lord.

For the demyther Jesus' virgin birth is a classical example of mythological rendering. It is extra-natural interference in the normal procedures of bi-sexual generation. We have here an instance of encounter between the two spheres—god's and man's. A typical demyther's rendering would admit the physical impossibility of human parthenogenesis and call attention to the clearly mythological character of the biblical witness. What Matthew and Luke intend of course is as follows: In rhetoric that speaks of an intrusion from outside nature, they were witnessing to the unique eschatological "X" that characterizes this Jesus, or, if he personally is not the unique "X", then the new age which his preaching and presence announces is.

The demythers concern is to get at what really happened and what the evangelists really wanted to convey to their readers. And that's the issue that must be at the center in theological deliberation. But as I see it, the demythers frame their deliberations in the model of a *theologia gloriae*, and thus seriously (if not totally) reduce their chances for getting at what really happened—especially if what really happened was *theologia crucis*. To put it crassly, if God himself was operating in terms of *theologia crucis*, then not only the answer, but the initial framing of the question will be something else.

The Lutheran tradition has sought to do its theologizing with the model of *theologia crucis*. In the rubrics of such a theology the central question is not how to get an other-worldly god perceptibly available down here on the ground of men. Rather this theology says: Given the premise that the creator is always operating in, with, and under the elements of creation, what is he doing? The first answer to that follows the paradigm of Genesis 3. What is God

doing? He is stalking his creation as its authorized and authoritative critic. He is indeed operational and active down here on the ground—too active! Man needs help vis-a-vis God's already operational *opus*. Needed is not a god who will break into the law of natural causality, or the law of finitude, or even the law of my chronic addiction to "das Vorfindliche" (if that were all that there was to that). No, needed rather is rescue, *soteria* "from the law of sin and death" inflicted by that very critic.

In terms of the "normal" divine data available to Adam and Eve, the prospects of anything like that last sentence are highly unlikely, really incredible. Something like that would truly be a miracle, but not the miracle that the demythers wrestle with as they seek to get at what really happened in the event and the witness to the event from virgin birth to resurrection. (Thielicke notes that Bultmann bridges at the mention of the resurrection of Jesus, while he takes God's forgiveness of sinners as an "of course". Luther saw the latter to be at least as incredible as the former, if not more so.) Consequently as *theologia crucis* goes about its work, this becomes its central question: Why, for what reasons, on what grounds would God break away from his critic's role as he stalks creation, and switch to a different *opus*—forgiving rather than criticizing sinners—as he deals with them right down here on the ground?

The following citation from a statement under discussion in the systematics department says it well:

"Systematic theology consciously and explicitly insists on asking 'Why.' It asks for The Sufficient Reason, The Adequate Basis, The *Fons*, never resting until it has found 'Reason Enough.' Why, for what reason finally, is this or that Christian claim made? By saying that the systematician asks for the 'why,' we're not suggesting that he does not know what it is. On the contrary, because he does know, at least in principle, what that sufficient reason is, his asking is meant chiefly to ask it into clarity, into the full prominence it deserves. He cannot even settle for the explanation, 'Why, because Scripture says so.' He still persists and asks again, 'And why, in turn, does Scripture say so?' His job is done only when he has traced the reason back to The Source: namely, God's reconciling the world unto himself in Christ Jesus—in other words, the gospel. The systematician's task is to 'necessitate' Christ.

With the foregoing statement in mind as well as the general remarks about *theologia crucis*, let us inquire into the problem presented by the virgin birth of Jesus. First of all the necessity question? What necessity do the scriptures themselves find in Jesus' virgin birth? Do they designate his virgin birth as necessary for anything? For his sinlessness? Although Augustine took this position, it is hard to show that any N.T. writer himself did. Perhaps the N.T. authors too like Luther later (guess who learned it from whom?) were cautioned by a caveat similar to the one Luther raised as he took Jerome and the papists to task for seeking to maintain the sinlessness of Christ. This concern to divest Christ of sin, he said, "is to abolish Christ and make him useless" (LW 26, 279).

Necessary (i.e., needed) for *soteria* is not some break in the law of physical causality and natural finitude. Needed is some break-through of the law of sin and death. A naked miracle that breaks through causality and finitude does not yet break through the curse imposed by the critical creator. Is the virgin birth deemed necessary by any Biblical author for this? Not very obviously, as far as I can see. Even the Biblical presentation of the origin of human bi-sexual reproduction tends in the opposite direction. There is no intrinsic "curse" to bi-sexual reproduction. Gen. 1 and 2 suggest that this biological law is one of the operational schemata of nonfallen existence. The curse comes in Gen. 3 as God inflicts his criticism, and begins to execute it. Gen. 4 and 5, whatever else they may be witnessing to us, are graphic portrayals of the operation of the law of sin and death—in Abel's murder and in the monotonous conclusion to each segment of the "book of the generations of Adam", viz., "and he died." There are no substantive biblical grounds for seeing a parthenogenetic birth as a conquest of this curse. Maybe male theologians are actually helpless to see that if anything, it would take a *painless* delivery of the child to signal that the curse was undone.

What then is the focus of NT witness for the *soteria* from

the curse of the law of sin and death? Even though the witness is variegated, the witnesses are unisonal in that the issue of soteriological necessity comes into focus at the conclusion, not the inception of Jesus' career. But of course right from the outset Jesus participates fully with men under this curse. So what is necessary for getting us out from under the curse is for him to get in under it, and take it away. Is it not the unanimous N.T. witness that this is the "necessity-issue" of Good Friday? And then one step more. If the curse, the law of sin and death, is not just to be taken off the sinners' backs, but smashed in its very operation, then needed is the resurrection into nonnomological existence of the very one who endured the curse of the law of sin and death. What is necessary in the life and work of Jesus for our salvation? What's the *sine qua non* without which the N.T. witnesses themselves would not have had sufficient grounds (by their own standards of analysis) to proclaim *eu-aggelion*? It's Jesus' Good Friday and Easter.

Whatever else Paul is doing in I Cor. 15 he is surely doing this very kind of wrestling with the question of necessity. Here it is explicitly the necessity of particular history to undo the "Unheils-geschichte" that is the natural history of man. What is there in the history of Jesus that has to be there, has to have happened, if we are not just to know more about the ways of God with man, but actually have for ourselves a history that rescues us from that history we have "in Adam"? What's necessary for that? A resurrected Christ, and specifically a resurrected "Christ (who) dies for our sins in accordance with the scriptures". "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins." His resurrection is as necessary as that. No segment of his life previous to Easter Sunday shows him immune to the law of sin and death. Easter does. He is not just immune to it, he has conquered it.

I myself have a hunch that it is this very insight operative in the theologies of many (all?) of the N.T. writers which leads them to give low-key treatment to the virgin birth of our Lord, if they were even aware of it. This is true even of Matthew and Luke despite the coverage they give it in their opening chapters. For them it was what they had received, and in their own unique witnessing they included it. But they themselves do not portray it with Easter's kind of necessity. The virgin birth of Jesus does not usher in non-nomological human history, least of all for him! But for the Evangelists the resurrection of the crucified one does indeed do that, for him — and for his.

And that is what is at the heart of eschatological existence. It is not existence derived from some transcendent divine space, or some transcendent divine time. It is rather a so-

matic existence that transcends the law of sin and death, an existence that is curse-proof, an existence that takes its origin exclusively from the generative juices of God's non-nomological grace — which happened in, with, under this Jesus history. But perhaps right at that point we have the closest affinity of Jesus' virgin birth to the benefits of his cross and resurrection. It is in this light that I understand Werner Elert's 2 "feste Saetze" on the virgin birth in his treatment of "The Incarnation".

- A) The virgin birth cannot be understood merely as a demonstration of God's omnipotence, for in the name of God's omnipotence it can just as well be said that it was not necessary; nor can it be the substantive grounds for Jesus' sinlessness (Augustine), since the scriptural testimony offers no foundations for such a notion.
- B) Its connection with the incarnation rather can only be found in the fact that the virgin "knew not a man" (Lk 1:34), that the conception of her child did not come from "the will of man" (cf. Jn. 1:13), that consequently the God-man born of her has his origin *exclusively* in God (Lk. 1:48 ff; Gal. 4:4).

Finally, is this anything close to demything? Or is all god-talk necessarily mythological? Only so, it seems, if God is relegated *a priori* to some a-cosmic, a-temporal, extra-terrestrial locus. But if he is intra-cosmic and intra-aeon, then as *theologia crucis* goes about its theologizing, there is no task of bringing God down from wherever and making him relevant and comprehensible to the world of men. Rather *theologia crucis* sees natural man living every moment in a too intimate relation with God already, with God's critical *opus*, a mortally intimate relationship. It sees the need for de-thanatizing, de-nomologizing, de-kriminizing human life, in fact the whole creation. That anything like that should even have happened is in principle (i.e., in nomological principle) incredible, but *theologia crucis* sees that that is what *really* happened on Good Friday and Easter Sunday. And if that is what really happened, then that dare not be demythed — on the very grounds of the demythers' own canons of operation. For what the evangelists affirm about these two days is not mythological; it is what *really* happened.

Here "God really was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not counting their trespasses against them."

Concordia Seminary
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5 f, 5. Permissiveness: The Physical Resurrection of Christ

All faculty members affirm the resurrection of Christ. However, some exhibit a hesitancy to affirm the reality of the resurrection in the historical ("it really happened — the tomb was empty") dimension. One man places the resurrection in the realm of faith and leaves unanswered the question of whether it really happened, asserting that the New Testament writers "avoid metaphysical and historical questions when they talk about the resurrection."

Another asserts that faith saw the risen Lord after the resurrection. The implication that cameras would not have been able to record the event tends to downgrade the historical ("it really happened") quality of the event and to place it in the realm of a subjective experience by the disciples, or what some would call a theological event.

The committee also encountered the opinion that one who rejects the physical resurrection of Christ could nevertheless be regarded as being in the Christian faith.

Particular attention is called to an essay delivered at a District pastoral conference. Sections of the essay are reproduced in the following pages. The essay attempts to translate the Gospel into terms meaningful to people who no longer ask, "How can I find a gracious God?" but who instead want to know, "What is the meaning of life? Who am I? Where am I going?"

It must be observed that Christian theology indeed has something to say about these latter questions. However, the Christian theologian cannot escape the obligation to teach people to ask the first question first: "How can I find a gracious God?" The essay fails to observe this primary task and instead turns directly to the questions people want answered. This would appear to represent a neglect of the use of the Law to awaken an awareness of the need of the Gospel.

In dealing with the resurrection as a focal point for theology, the essayist finds himself unable to say anything about the resurrection beyond the fact that it is somehow revelatory of God's plan for creation and the human race. The position is taken that even the Biblical language about the resurrection is no longer adequate to communicate the nature and meaning of the resurrection to modern man.

It is clear from the essay that the author is working with the understanding that reality is "process." That is, he moves within the philosophical concepts of "process theology." These concepts, rather than the Biblical account, form the basis of his exposition.

The essay seems to agree with a process theology that identifies time with the risen Christ. ("For the Christian, time becomes the presence of the Risen One, the real living actuality of Christ within the world of time.") This strongly suggests the false idea that the God-manhood relationship was not once-for-all uniquely and exclusively actualized in the womb of Mary. It suggests that it is rather being actualized in the matrix of time.

Note that the essayist suggests that "the Son Himself is in process: He is Himself Dynamic." In process theology this statement means that the dynamic process is Christ, and that when the process is completed at the consummation of the ages and creation is absorbed back into deity, God will again be all in all.

Furthermore, the essayist's argumentation raises serious questions about the sacrificial substitutionary death of Christ, for the doctrine of the vicarious atonement finds no place in the framework of process theology.

It thus appears that this professor accepts or allows as viable options aspects of process theology which raise serious questions about the central events of the Christian faith.

Cf. Appendix IV: *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, Section IV, F, 8, 9, "The Infallibility of Scripture."

For documentation of these findings, see the following transcripts and essay.

Documentation

Prof. N. Transcript

pp. 21-27

COMMITTEE: Well now, the authority of Scripture, now what happens? One man looks at a document, and he says, "This brings forth to me a truth about the spirit of the risen Christ in the Christian community." Another man looks at that document and he says, "Christ physically came out of the grave. He was resurrected. He lives." Now I am asking: Where do you—what are the Lutheran presuppositions that keeps you from denying the physical resurrection, to give an example?

PROF. N: Well, my position would be to believe the physical resurrection. But when I find someone to understand the resurrection, that Holy Scripture often talk about our body to rise in glorified body. Now I really do not know what that glorified body in physical reality might be. But the resurrection of Christ by some other people may not understand exactly as I do. But I would not deny his faith to believe Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and Redeemer because of his particular differences in understanding of the resurrection.

COMMITTEE: Would it be possible for him to have this faith and have his belief in the resurrection to mean that the bones could be still located, at least that Jesus did not come to life physically? Or what did you mean when you said a different view of the resurrection?

PROF. N: Well, he would say that Christ rose in different form; not in same body as before. Now if he says that, I certainly would not deny his validity of a Christian faith. I would certainly recognize it in uncomfortable relationship, yet as long as he believes that the Christ as his personal Savior, and I suppose there is valid ground of recognizing his Christian faith.

COMMITTEE: Would he have to accept in your judgment a physical resurrection?

PROF. N: Well, there are many people who do not accept the physical resurrection of Christ as I do.

COMMITTEE: Well let's just take the "as I do" off there and say: Do you believe that, to be a Christian, he would have to accept the physical resurrection?

PROF. N: Well, I say that it would not deny his Christianness of belonging to the Christian communion, simply because he had different view on the resurrection of Christ.

COMMITTEE: May I enter into this? Let's just—I want to make sure we know what you mean by a different view. Now if the different view has to do with what kind of body He had, you know, and you go back to Paul and First Corinthians, when he talks about the glorified body, you know (yes), sown a mortal and raised to spiritual and so on; but let's not, and there of course we can't clearly define it—

PROF. N: ... the question ...

COMMITTEE: No, that isn't X's question; that's why I want to help to — X's question is: Suppose that person says, "Yes, I believe in Christ, I am saved by Christ, but I do not think Christ came back to life. I do not think there was a quickening. I think the tomb either was still full, occupied, or I think somebody stole the corpse. In other words, any Easter appearance was simply a hallucination or appearing of a spirit," etc.

PROF. N: This is not historical Christian stand, but what I am saying is this mystery of Christ's life, including resurrection, is mystery to many people, and it is the over-exaggeration of our theological position to clearly define how and what way, in what physical condition Christ rose.

COMMITTEE: He's not talking about that. He's talking about did He rise or did He not —?

PROF. N: ... Well, I say that is a historical position of our general orthodox Christian tradition, that He rose from the dead, and I even said I believe in physical resurrection of Christ, as X say; I do take that position from that physical resurrection of Christ.

COMMITTEE: I understand, X, but my question was whether you would think it essential to a person's Christianity to accept a physical resurrection of Jesus.

PROF. N: Now when I say, I do not know how you would say this is essential in Christian faith?

COMMITTEE: Could he be a Christian and deny the physical resurrection?

PROF. N: I think so. I think there is ample ground that he to become a Christian even though he denies, not necessarily physical resurrection of Christ, but that he has certain different interpretation of the resurrection, and I would not deny his validity of a Christian faith.

COMMITTEE: Would you give us an example of a different kind of interpretation so we know what you are talking about?

PROF. N: Well, that's what you said before (yes) that some would say probably the body was in the tomb or the body was brought out by someone or that, this is of course — is a extreme case —

COMMITTEE: ... could you believe that and still be a Christian?

PROF. N: No, that's an extreme examples, what you gave. But here in disagreement of the exactly defining what the physical resurrection of Christ is. Whatever their understanding of the resurrection of the "glorified body" is. I suppose there are different views, and I think these different views would not deny his being Christian.

COMMITTEE: Now I think Luke 24, says feel me and see if a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see me have, *σάρκα, ὀστέα*. Now this doesn't explain the mystery, but it does identify a physical resurrection, does it not?

PROF. N: Surely, that's what my Christian position would be. However, I would think, like many other mysteries of the Christ life on earth, there are different interpretations, and the resurrection is one of those, and this different understanding of the resurrection I certainly would not exclude in being Christian; that's what I am saying.

COMMITTEE: Do you think, X, that St. Paul maybe did draw that conclusion in First Corinthians 15, that if you deny the physical resurrection, that you are yet in your sins and your faith is vain and it can't help you, it can't save you if you deny this. He was buried and that He rose again the third day according to the promises that Old Testament scriptures already [two talking] and that if this resurrection didn't take place, there's no resurrection of the dead at all, and if Christ did not rise [two talking] the conclusion —

PROF. N: But this is not the question which we are really asking, whether someone deny the resurrection or not. It's different people understanding resurrection in different way. In First Corinthians 15 St. Paul is really taking the heart of Christianity, saying that we live forever as Christ rose again from the dead, and His resurrection assures us our eternal life, and He is the — our Example, and He did rise

from the dead, and that is our Christian position. But in certain other Christian people would say, "The Christ resurrection was something like a spiritual resurrection, in different form of the body," and it is — certainly, when somebody says that, I would think it is very unfortunate, as I said before, I would feel tremendous uncomfortable relationship with them, but I would hesitate to exclude him from the Christian communion.

COMMITTEE: But Paul says, we saw Him, Cephas saw Him, 500 saw Him, and he says and finally I got to see that resurrected body, Paul says, and last of all, as one born out of due time, I saw Him; and he uses his own personal experience of a confrontation with the resurrected Christ and says: Now if this didn't happen, then you are still unpardoned, you would have no salvation.

PROF. N: But the question of X and others was not total denial of the resurrection but different views of resurrection. Certainly denial of the resurrection you can include as different interpretations, this is what I think would be his denial of the resurrection would not have a place in the Christian faith.

COMMITTEE: Could that body have risen if the bones are still in the grave? Could there have been a resurrection and could there have been a — have a Christ whose body is still in the grave, and Jesus was seen by Paul?

PROF. N: This is the position of a physical resurrection that he goes with the bones in the grave. That is why in saying so that His bones and body appeared in some different form. Of course one extreme example of the different view of resurrection, and certainly, I would not accept this as a Christian view.

COMMITTEE: I think it is important that we be clear on this because it seems to me you gave a kind of — my question was not what kind of form Jesus had but whether there was a resurrection of His body, whether this is essential for a Christian to accept this. Now you said, if I recall correctly, that some may take a spiritual view of the resurrection and have a different view as to the physical. Now this seemed to me, what I am asking is: Can a person be a Christian and deny a physical resurrection regardless of the kind of body or what he looked like, but physical? You know what we are talking about as physical, that the body of Jesus was raised. That was my question.

PROF. N: I stated clearly that I do accept the physical resurrection of Christ, and who do not believe in that I have very difficult and uncomfortable relationship. Here again I would hesitate, that if he has certain different understanding of the resurrection, not denying the resurrection, not altogether exclude him or say he is not Christian at all.

COMMITTEE: Let me see if I can help on this. Suppose I say that I believe in the spiritual resurrection but exclusively that. In other words, I believe that Christ is still around, but I do not accept that any way, shape, or form His human nature, that about Him that was flesh and bones and so forth was revived. Now regardless of what form it is, but I say I believe in the resurrection, Christ is alive. But if you ask me relative to what about His body and I say, "Well, that doesn't make any difference," or "I don't know," or, "But it is only the spiritual as opposed to the physical" — would you say that I can believe that and be a Christian?

PROF. N: Now here I clearly take the position of the physical resurrection of our Lord from the dead. Now to some people this would be tremendous mystery like many other parts of the Christian teaching. The person who believes that Christ as a personal Savior and by the miracle of the suffering and death of Christ on the cross he has forgiveness of sins and eternal life and he has different, certain unorthodox Christian understanding of resurrection according to my understanding or my reverence to the Holy Scriptures and the understanding of my church's position, I would think it is very unfortunate, but I wonder if I can go to say he is not Christian at all. That is what I am saying.

COMMITTEE: Would it be subversive of the Christian faith, I am wondering. This terminology isn't totally adequate but what I come up with at this point. Are the fact and the mode of the resurrection so neatly and so totally susceptible of the separation? Is it not true that if one tampers with

the mode, by which I mean not to explain the mystery but the mode in the sense of the raising of the body of the Lord, if you tamper with the mode beyond a certain point, is not the fact, the theological import of the resurrection dissipated, so that, suppose I would say for me personally it makes little difference whether Christ's tomb was empty or not, I would have exactly the same faith in His resurrection in either case. What happens if I make a statement like that?

PROF. N: When I meet a person who denies the resurrection of Christ as I understand it, as I stated it before, I would think it very unfortunate, but it is a reality that there are many people who do not accept Christ's resurrection as I do. But simply I am saying I cannot exclude him altogether from the Christian communion.

COMMITTEE: I tried to change that point a little bit. I can appreciate your difficulty. I think all of us have it about saying about some fellow he is not a Christian. This is something quite precarious; I would concur in that judgment. But how about saying about this sort of approach to the resurrection that it at least tends to be subversive of the foundation of the Christian faith? Is that too severe a judgment?

PROF. N: I think any approach of the human teachings that can be subversive to destroy the core of the Christian faith. I think it is Christian duty to defend the very core of the Christian stance. That is why I say that when a person, when I meet a person who does not agree with my understanding of Christian faith, it is very unfortunate and uncomfortable relationship, but to win him to a great understanding of the resurrection as I see, no words would help to exclude him or to deny his Christian faith.

COMMITTEE: I am afraid we are going to have to stop at this point, X. We always have the feeling that we would like to talk more on the many topics we didn't cover, but we do manage to cover quite a few, and we are very grateful to you for being with us and for having a chance to visit with you, and we appreciate your coming down.

PROF. N: Thank you. I appreciate it. And here on the resurrection question I think I in the latter part I thought that the question a little bit slowing down, I was hoping that your questions to come out in machine-gun way to be fast, and I know that went into that area I couldn't easily escape. I mean not to say to avoid that question, but again I like to clarify that point that denial of the resurrection and certain different interpretations of the resurrection should be treated in different way. Because he understands resurrection differently, in different way from others, and I think it is very unchristian and uncharitable thing to do to say he is unchristian or not Christian at all or is not Lutheran.

COMMITTEE: The point of the questions of course was how much can you deviate in terms of the convictions you yourself hold and the ones that we hold in common and the way Paul describes it and the way the Gospels describe it, and speak of a resurrection and yet still have a resurrection. In other words, if I speak of something that is purely spiritual with nothing physical involved and go against flesh and blood, Luke 24 and so on, do I in fact have a resurrection, and do I in fact have actually a completed redemption, if Christ physically did not come back to life?

PROF. N: The problem is this, not what I would take that —

COMMITTEE: I mean this was our point, and then as we ask more questions, the purpose always is to clarify. It usually means that we think maybe we haven't communicated to you and we are not sure you understand our question, and I am sure that often happens; we are not clear enough in questions, and then sometimes we are not at all sure that we have understood you in your answers, and this is why we tend to rephrase them and come back again and again because the one thing we want to get is clarity in communication, so that we understand one another, and this is the sole purpose of any further questioning.

COMMITTEE: I don't want to go away with the wrong impression, but I think I was reading you right. You did state that if a person denies the resurrection then you would say he is not a Christian.

PROF. N: I would, yes. But a different interpretation of the resurrection I would not. That is what I was trying to say.

Prof. D. Transcript

pp. 7-9

COMMITTEES I would like to come back to another statement that you made in which you talked about the death and resurrection of Christ and what it means to you and what it means for all Christians and for all men too, and you spoke of it in terms of a hinge of history; I think that was the phrase that you used. Now we know that there are different ways that men view the resurrection, that there are some who view it as indeed insisting on a physical resurrection, that Christ rose in the sense that indeed His physical body came back to life, changed of course, the exalted Christ versus the Christ in the state of humiliation, but nonetheless He did emerge from the tomb, that there was more than simply the spirit of Christ in the resurrection. This of course has been typical Lutheran theology. Now there are those who feel that the resurrection should be viewed more as an existential event and that we meet the resurrected Christ in terms of the forgiveness of God and the Gospel and so on and that it is really a matter of some indifference, not vital as to whether or not one insists on a truly physically resurrected Savior. Would you care to comment on that in terms of your own personal position and what you think one could allow and still be within the pale of Christian faith?

PROF. D: Well, you really asked a bunch of questions there all at once.

COMMITTEE: Let's give you a chance to just sort of hold forth on it and then we will —

PROF. D: One thing is very important, and that is that you don't insist *just* on the historical resurrection on the one side or *just* on the existential dimensions of that act or the theological dimensions on the other hand. The moment you try and focus very selectively or precisely on one or the other, you get caught in a limiting of what happens, a distortion of the Gospel event. Now you are wanting me to read Paul's texts about the resurrection. He will at certain points, like in First Corinthians 15, be very adamant about the resurrection as something first that involves something that really happened in some way. And on the other hand it is something that involves us because He is not just someone who has risen, He is the Firstfruits, and the process involves the rest of those who are in the body of Christ. Or if you look at other texts, like Romans, it is clear that our baptism in some sense participates in the resurrection of Christ [the death and resurrection] so that the resurrection of Christ is not merely something that happened in the distant past as some kind of isolated event in the course of history. If it is just that, we might as well forget it, and if we go at the whole understanding of those texts just with that in mind, we have completely missed the point of the Gospel narratives or the Pauline texts about resurrection, namely, that we are in Christ, and we participate in that event in some remarkable way. And so clearly, if it involves me, it is very existential, but it is also something that is tied to that great moment in the course of history when God began the new age. That is the moment of the resurrection, which in that sense is indeed the hinge of history, the turning point from the old age to the new age, the coming in of the kingdom of God and the beginning of the *eschaton*.

COMMITTEE: Now the last question, the last part of the question was granting and insisting on the existential course. What is your opinion with reference to the validity or permissibility, let's say, of the option that I stop with the existential, that I say that I don't really believe that the tomb was empty or I think possibly, as some theories go, that the body was stolen, and I think somebody has developed even an interesting theory that Christ, well, that is a different — I was thinking of this Japanese bit, but it doesn't really come into the question here, but basically if I am a pastor in the Missouri Synod and I felt very strongly about those fine existential things that you talked about and Paul talks about in the New Testament, obviously very much connected with me and all men, but I still say that I don't feel that it is necessary for me to insist that the tomb was really empty or that Christ indeed came back as far as His human nature is concerned, came back to life. Is this an option that you feel I as a pastor in the Synod can hold and teach so long as I teach the existential connection, or am I placing myself outside the pale of Christianity when I do that?

PROF. D: Well, the question of whether or not I can teach

a position in which I ignore the historical dimensions of the resurrection I think is extraordinary important. Our faith is in a sense (not in a sense) but in a fact, as we believe it, something tied to history, And Christ was not simply an idea; He was not simply some kind of Platonic idea or philosophical idea. He was a man who walked this earth, and He died and rose at a certain point and time in history, And so it is extraordinarily important that we make clear that we are tying whatever existential dimensions we see to that point and moment in history and that Person in history. Otherwise we have moved into Taoism or something else. We cannot divorce the existential and the historical in our teaching, but somebody may have some misgivings personally is another question. But primarily when one is insisting upon teaching in the Lutheran tradition, one could not ignore the historical dimensions of the resurrection.

Prof. W. Transcript

pp. 8-11

COMMITTEE: You just brushed by the resurrection incidentally. I would like to stop there for a moment and ask what your reaction would be to this modern Roman Catholic's statement as follows: "Modern exegetists are quite willing to admit that if a camera had been focused on the holy sepulcher at the time of the resurrection the film would have remained blank. If Pilate or Tacitus had been in the room in which Jesus appeared, they would very likely have seen nothing at all." What would your reaction be to that?

PROF. W: What is the name of the book?

COMMITTEE: *The Gospel Without Myth*.

PROF. W: I would sure like to read the whole thing. I have no problem with the resurrection of the dead. I am sure of the resurrection of my Lord. I am sure if I were there I would have seen an empty tomb after the resurrection. But again I accept that not because I can historically prove He rose from the dead. I don't think I can do that even with all the witnesses. But I believe it, as a matter of faith.

COMMITTEE: Let me just go on a little bit here, jumping now a few sentences. "For me personally it makes little difference whether Christ's tomb was empty or not. I would have exactly the same faith in His resurrection in either case."

PROF. W: I think our Confessions probably have a little more to say on that particular point of view, the importance of the resurrection for the Christian, and I would freely subscribe to what our Confessions say.

COMMITTEE: Would you feel that what our Confessions say would require a *damnamus* here of the statement that a camera would have remained blank, that Pilate or Tacitus would have seen nothing in the room in which Jesus appeared?

PROF. W: I would like to read the whole thing before I would make a judgment.

COMMITTEE: Well, just, even though I pull it out, the context is pretty much in the same vein. But just that bald statement, leaving out the account whether we are being totally fair to the author here or not, I don't think that is the point, but just this as the kind of statement about the resurrection that one hears with disconcerting frequency these days, and I am just wondering more precisely how you would react to that.

PROF. W: I believe in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have no problem with that, and I am not sure though how I would react at this point —

COMMITTEE: Maybe I can help a little bit. I think what X is getting at is this: You have indicated several times — and it is wonderful that you believe in the resurrection, we all do — but now sometimes you run into individuals, and I am not referring to any of your colleagues, but we do run into individuals in this world of ours who say that as 20th-century men [cough] believe in this and accepting it. We are not saying, Can you prove it? or anything like that; we are simply saying, Can a person put it in these terms, be a Lutheran theologian in good standing, and take a position that the resurrection of Christ never happened in any factual realistic way but rather that it was perhaps a wonderful influence and spirit that took hold of the disciples after Christ's death and that that really is what the resurrection means? In

other words that the story that is told is just a vehicle for carrying the message that in the spirit of Christ we are resurrected and we really look upon Him as resurrected but that the thing that is described there by the evangelists never happened. Now if you had a student who took this position — and I am not referring to any particular student; I never heard that any of your students took this position, but if they did, we are just trying to establish your position in terms of what you may or may not permit — would you say such a student could be graduated, could be placed, and could serve as a Lutheran pastor? In other words, would you tolerate this?

PROF. W: I see my being here to give a witness and testimony of what I believe, teach, and confess. And I believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Again with a student I would have to spend much more time with on that particular point than what we could possibly develop here in this time.

COMMITTEE: Part of what you believe is not only what you yourself personally hold. Part of what you believe is what you believe is what somebody else may hold and still be within the Christian Lutheran —

PROF. W: And I cannot determine that on a first encounter. To me that takes a little more time.

COMMITTEES Quite a number of years ago Bishop Söderblom of Sweden was in this country, and he came to Rock Island, Illinois, the college there, and our men tried to pin him down on the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ, and he would say, Yes, He lives, but there is a — but did that body get out of that grave? Jesus lives. If you were president of the seminary, would you say Bishop Söderblom would be a good candidate for a teaching position at the seminary?

PROF. W: I don't aspire to that position of president — I daily give thanks that I am not president of the seminary. But there again, I would have to spend a lot more time with that question before making a judgment.

COMMITTEE: But he tells you I am not going to answer the —

PROF. W: Does he? I don't have the facts right here. I personally believe in that He bodily rose from the dead.

COMMITTEE: Do you think he could be a teacher at our school, where we prepare the prophets for the prophetic job, if he himself refuses to say I am not going to answer your question whether He rose; Jesus lives. That was ultimately the position of Söderblom, and he is a Swedish Lutheran. Is that too hypothetical?

PROF. I: I think so, X. I think you are going into — frankly, I don't know Söderblom's point on this one either. I know that he has been a much maligned person in our own circles here in the United States because he has been so very much misunderstood, and I think that you have to make a distinction; in this discussion the distinction is not being made between people who will say the resurrection could not have happened; we live in such a world that there can't be a resurrection. Now that is a person who has a mind-set, a point of view about life, and from that point of view he makes a judgment about the resurrection of our Lord. That is one kind of person. But then there is another kind of person who is saying, and I think, I don't know, I don't know that book either, and I am not going to defend the author of that book in statements that he made but simply to point out that there are indeed questions and problems that need to be dealt with quite seriously about the relation between history and eternity and the relation between life as we know it, which we describe as physical and that life which is the result of the resurrection of our Lord, which even St. Paul can't quite figure out how to describe in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, and the interesting relation between faith and the experience of the resurrection. It is interesting that it is only the believers who saw the risen Lord. So I think there is a whole lot more that is involved in any question when you start talking about the physical body, the physical resurrection, cameras taking pictures of people coming out of tombs, you are dealing with an order of reality that is beyond our comprehension. Don't try to bring it back to the order of comprehension as we know it preresurrection. And now talk about taking photographs. That is why I think we have to distinguish between

people who a priori say there can't be a resurrection and those who are trying to find their way through a totally new reality, which is the new reality of the risen Christ, and try to find language appropriate to that. And I don't know if possibly Söderblom might have been trying to use different kind of language.

COMMITTEE: What I am trying to get at, X, is whether there is this dualism permitted, that a man can be so evasive about the resurrection that he is not willing to go along with the Gospel account: "Behold My hands; touch Me, Thomas; feel Me; this is My body." Now Söderblom didn't accept that. All I am asking then, and this is not with any diabolical intent at all, it is merely sharing with you my concern about the product that's being produced. If the product is uncertain as Söderblom was uncertain and he would not commit himself as to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, merely to say, "He lives," to me is not Lutheran, and above all it isn't Missouri. And all I am asking: Do you think he is a — forget about president of a seminary, X, but would you graduate that guy?

PROF. W: And what I am saying is that what I believe and teach and confess is a bodily resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMITTEE: And you believe that the record says it.

PROF. W: I believe that the record says it.

COMMITTEE: Let me just on this controverted point let me rephrase it and then, X, come back to you. Prof. W, what we are interested in knowing at this point has to do with your position, not just that you yourself accept it — for which we all, praise God — and we all accept it by faith, but what we are asking is: Is it your position that an individual may deny the reality of the resurrection, and by reality I mean that Christ rose from the dead, appeared to these individuals, said, "Put your hand into My side, put your hand into the nail prints," and so on — all of these things Scripture says, say that that all really didn't happen but was just a way in which the New Testament community expressed the gloriousness of the feeling they had after Christ — in other words, there was no real resurrection, the tomb remained. If it was empty, it was because someone had stolen Him. Now, our point is, Do you regard the doctrine of the resurrection as a cornerstone of Christian faith which cannot be denied?

PROF. W: Most certainly.

Prof. XX

Essay: *The Resurrection and Our Christian Hope*

Part II. The Construction

... It has been often observed, especially by Troeltsch and Tillich, that Luther's generation concerned itself with the question, "How can I find a gracious God?" Most observers of the theological scene today tell us that this is no longer the burning question. Rather the question today is, "What is the meaning of life? Who am I? Where am I going?" To answer these questions calls for a theology which deals adequately with the concepts of life, time, and history. The natural focal point for such a Christian theology is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. We begin with a brief summary of the Biblical data, drawing also on a previous presentation. Although the Gospel writers devote surprisingly little space to the account of the Resurrection, they make it clear that all that precedes the Resurrection can be understood only in the light of the Resurrection. Paul's system of thought makes a coherent whole only when the Resurrection is viewed as the integrating principle. Thus in the New Testament the Resurrection is the focal point of theological construction. Vicarious atonement likewise emphasized. Over the centuries, resurrection may have slipped.

Perhaps we need to remind ourselves that the New Testament talks about Resurrection and says very little about immortality. Immortality was the Greek concern, Resurrection was the Jewish-Christian concern. The New Testament writers share the common conviction that Jesus Christ arose from the grave or that the Father raised Him, but they are very stingy with details. The non-canonical Gospels, usually misunderstanding the nature and importance of the Resurrection, were generous about supplying these details. When

the Synoptic Gospel writers describe the Resurrection, the details vary considerably, at times to the point of seeming contradiction. It is important to realize this fact, for it says something about the very nature of the Resurrection. This act of God does not lend itself to rational description or to rational proof. It is an act which can be understood and described only from faith to faith. Just as there is no meaningful or rational description of creation, so there can be no meaningful description of the Resurrection. The Resurrection traditions in the Gospels are confessions of faith. They come from the faith of the writers and they speak to our own faith.

The modern rational man is not content with this confessional understanding. He seeks to get behind the Resurrection, to describe in detail what happened, and to prepare the "five final proofs" of the reality of the Resurrection. But this approach does great harm to the purpose of the Biblical narratives. Our challenge is to understand the Biblical witness in the light of its own most real dimension. This most real dimension was an experience, shattering in its essence, which revealed to the disciples something about God's nature and what God's plan for creation and the human race which they had never dreamed of. The New Testament writers avoid metaphysical and historical questions whenever they talk about the Resurrection. Paul writes about the Resurrection at length in 1 Cor. 15, and never once suggests a meaningful answer to questions of this kind. He arose in the body, but it was a spiritual body. What does this mean? In 2 Cor. 5, Paul offers the suggestion that the spiritual body of Christ and the spiritual body of the believer is something that he puts on in addition to his present body. But what does all this mean to modern rational man?

A. Creation

God planned the incarnation and the Resurrection of His Son long before the foundations of the world were laid. He loved us in Him before creation. These grand plans were not prompted by the fact of the Fall, but were rather part of God's own complete plan, which His people have always sought to understand more fully. To make the incarnation only God's answer to the problem of the Fall is to limit the Biblical witness and to rob the Resurrection of its real central meaning.

When we speculate about this plan of God for the end time, we often content ourselves by saying that it will consist in the restoration of the state man enjoyed in Paradise. But God has much more than that in mind for us. The first creation was good, but it was not perfect. Possibility of corruption. From eternity, God planned a new creation, a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness would dwell. He loves this new creation and gave us our brightest glimpse of it in the Resurrection. The Resurrection is a creation out of nothing as surely as the first creation was. What little the Resurrection tells us about this new creation is tantalizing in the extreme. Death will be forever conquered; our canons of matter, time and space will be overcome; our bodies will know none of their present limitations; God will be all in all, that goal for which Christians of all ages have always worked, consciously or unconsciously.

Somewhere along the line, theologians drove a wedge between the new creation and the Resurrection. The result was that the Resurrection lost its corporate quality and its essential cosmological character. It became primarily the assurance to a long series of individual Christians that they would enjoy eternal life individually.

Of course, the Church is concerned about the salvation of individuals; that is its business. But its concern is not limited to them as individuals. It always sees them as members of the body of Christ and objects of God's creating and preserving love. This immediately places them into integral relationship with all other Christians and with the rest of God's creation.

One school of theologians has stressed the Resurrection almost exclusively as God's remedy for the fall. But Resurrection is not limited to this. Resurrection is not even the restoration of the original state in Paradise, but literally a second miracle of creation. Ernst Käsemann says:

Resurrection is therefore to be identified not with the restoration of the original state, but with the bringing of the original position to its final consummation in Christ. It is, so to speak, a second miracle in creation, for which

the whole creation waits before and after the Fall and which is now made clear for the first time in the Risen One. (172)

Does this mean a consummation in time and in history? This would seem to many to be the logical conclusion. But rather, it calls for a reevaluation of both time and history. We have drawn a non-Biblical line between time and eternity. These are not the same, but neither are they as totally and essentially in opposition as theologians have sometimes taught. To posit this absolute breach between time and eternity is to deny any real significance to the Resurrection. When Christ rose, he brought into time the dimension of eternity. The Resurrection gave to time a direction and a purpose. When the Greeks distinguished between time and eternity, they did so for very practical reasons. For them, time was a squirrel cage, endlessly revolving, going nowhere, and marked by the regular and total repetition of previous eras. For them, eternity was deliverance from time and was something to be earnestly coveted. It stood in diametric opposition to time. The Resurrection says that time and eternity have been brought together in Jesus Christ and that henceforth time is not the foe of the Christian. It is an ally of his. This insight is of great value to modern man. Time moves inevitably towards consummation in the Risen One. For the Christian, time becomes the presence of the Risen One, the real living actuality of Christ within the world of time. Confronted by this presence, the man experiences his time as *kaïros*, his time of eternal opportunity. (Künneth, 186-189).

B. Reality

Medieval theologians gave a great deal of thought to the question of the nature of reality. The pragmatic American has never worried about this, but new discoveries in space and matter are forcing him to prepare a definition of reality. Most people, one supposes, would define reality as that which they can see, feel, taste, and hear. But Albert Einstein at the scientific level and Alfred North Whitehead at the philosophical level challenge and reject this definition. Both men insist, on the basis of their own researches, that reality is process and is constantly in motion. There is nothing static in this world. In other words, it is now doubtful that what we see, taste, hear, and feel is reality; in greater likelihood, it is a phase of reality or an imitation of it. The hippies have perhaps appreciated the typical implications of Einstein and Whitehead most quickly. Because they believe that change is at the heart of reality, they insist upon translating this principle also into social and political structures. This provides the genuine hippies with a dynamic hope in an otherwise oppressive static world.

The Einsteinian definition of reality agrees quite closely with the New Testament understanding of reality. We begin with the affirmation that the crucified and the risen Christ are one and the same. Gospel records want to make this point very clear, and Thomas is the last to be persuaded of this definition of reality. In the Resurrection, the crucified Jesus, that last hope of the human race who had finally Himself been vanquished by the last enemy, came crashing back to life. In the Resurrection, He gave the lie to every previous understanding of the nature of reality. In the Resurrection, God Himself affirmed the connection between divinity and humanity, between God and creation, between God and man. In this light, the common slogan of the early eastern Fathers is correct: "God became man that we might become God." Concerning the Resurrection, one can say either that eternity came crashing into time or that time went spiraling into eternity. But, at any rate, the Resurrection necessitates a complete re-definition of reality. To summarize this, let us reverse the Calvinistic slogan to read, *Infinitum capax finiti*. Luther was talking about this when he said that it is impossible to push Jesus too deep into humanness. To this we would add that it is likewise impossible to push Him too high into Deity. If the Church has had trouble maintaining this balance, it usually tended to err on the Docetic side. Preachers find it difficult to preach the full meaning of the incarnation. It had to be so that Christ might die for sins, this they could understand. But there is so much more to the meaning of the incarnation for our personal faith, of preaching and our counselling.

In the Resurrection, God gave Christ the new title, *Kurios*.

The Bible nowhere says that this title was restored to Jesus, but that it was a new title given to Him in virtue of the Resurrection. (See Eph. 1:10, 21; Col. 2:10, 15; Phil. 3:21; Rom. 14:7 ff.; 1 Cor. 15:24 f.; 1 Pet. 3:22.) Künneth observes, "it is of supreme importance to recognize that in the Resurrection Jesus received something from God which He did not until then possess, namely His 'lordship.'" (p.132)

Against this background, we can understand a difficult passage in 1 Cor., where Paul speaks of Jesus having overcome the last enemy then turning everything over to God so that once again God is all in all. This suggests that the Son Himself is in process; He is Himself dynamic. The Son Himself is moving toward the consummation and that the creation which He invested with Himself in the incarnation is likewise moving. The closest that we can come to an understanding of reality is in the Resurrection. Augustine taught us to think like Platonists; he taught us to believe that reality is static, existing somewhere in perfect form and shape. This was a perversion of the Christian understanding, and it is to the credit of modern man, Christian and non-Christian alike, that they have forced us to abandon this foreign intrusion.

This understanding of reality as process becomes a foundation stone for the theology of hope, associated especially with the names of Wolfhart Pannenberg and Jürgen Moltmann. These men remind us that the future belongs to God, that it is therefore completely open, that the Christian should be the most open of people, and that creation and its people are moving toward the goal which God has established. Moltmann in particular reminds us that even as we move toward this goal, the goal itself moves on beyond us. He calls the Christian to look not so much upward, as forward. The theology of hope, here very briefly summarized, does not destroy the thought of the day of judgment. It simply says that there is much more to a Christian faith than the placid, often fear-filled, quietistic waiting for that day. We are partners with God in the new creation which He effected in the Resurrection. Some practical aspects of this will be explored in Presentation 3.

Would it be in order to ask what understanding of reality the liturgical practices in the Church and in your congregation reflect? We often hear the observation today that too many people think that they have God in a box. This understanding of God is diametrically opposed to the Biblical understanding of the Resurrection. How, for example, does our celebration of the Eucharist contribute to our people's understanding of reality as static or as dynamic? Is it only the act of adoration of the risen Christ; the Christ Who sits at the right hand of God? Or is it actually a pilgrim fellowship feast; an eager looking forward to that messianic banquet, which our Lord said He would not share in again until that day when He shares it with us new in His kingdom? Is your Eucharistic celebration a pilgrim drama? How do such new customs as separate right of fraction and elevation affect our people's understanding of the Eucharistic reality?

C. The Theology of the Cross

But does this construction of Resurrection theology not border on a theology of glory, on a triumphalism which is foreign to both the Scriptures and especially the Lutheran theological system? One of the functions of responsible theological construction is to recognize dangers where they exist. A theology of glory could develop from this theology of the Resurrection. But this would happen only if the theology of the Resurrection is divorced from the Cross. The same criticism can be with good cause levelled against some proponents of the theology of hope. The cross, the defeat, the suffering the shame connected with it, are integral parts of God's plan for the new creation. The essence of the old creation was death. Before the new creation could be established, death had to be conquered. Death was conquered when God's Son died. (rose). There was nothing glorious about Gethsemane and Golgatha. As Luther observed, "No man ever feared death like this man." A comparison of the deaths of Socrates and of Jesus is most instructive here. Socrates faced death calmly, discoursing at a high level with his disciples. Jesus was frightened of death, and sought in every possible way to escape from it. When he found this impossible, He could only face it with crying and bitter groaning. God in His essence must conceal Himself from

man. The new creation can only be hinted at. And that is why, by the way, the Resurrection must forever remain a primary scandal of the Christian gospel. God's dealings with man in this world only take place in a hidden form, only *sub cruce tectum*. "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

The Cross and our Lord's death also provide the answers to our questions about sin and life. God's offer to man is always life. But in making the offer of life in Jesus Christ, God also speaks a judgment on man, for this man is dying without God's life. Where the Resurrection is not confessed and acknowledged, there is death. The theology of Resurrection can face realistically the likelihood of a cataclysmic

catastrophe in the near future. But over against that cataclysm and in the sure hope of the new creation, the Christian calls out to all men to acknowledge the reality of death which is theirs outside the kingdom. They present God's call to escape, not to escape into some never-never land, but to escape into the reality of the Resurrection hope and the Resurrection life.

Sin is death. Forgiveness is the new life. Christ came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. But it is always and only life that comes through death. Part of our death is to say no to contemporary definitions of reality as consisting of those things that we see, taste, touch, hear. . . .

5 f, 6. Permissiveness: The Lord's Supper

All professors claim adherence to belief in the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar. However, permissiveness is present in that denial of the Real Presence is treated as a pastoral problem and not a doctrinal one. Likewise such denial is not condemned as false doctrine, provided there is nothing in such a position that conflicts with the Gospel.

Some advocate a false basis for altar fellowship contrary to the practice and polity of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Several professors hold that people who agree on the Gospel and the doctrine of the Lord's Supper may commune at our altars regardless of denominational affiliation and possible differences on other doctrines. Seminary policy allows for selective fellowship in permitting non-Lutherans to attend the sacrament, although this practice is said to be on a limited basis.

In some instances concelebration of the sacrament by Lutheran and non-Lutheran pastors is approved. One professor allows for the possibility that Lutheran and Roman Catholic theologians who have been in dialog about the sacrament may legitimately commune together.

Congregational control of admission to Holy Communion through its pastor is abandoned in favor of allowing the person who desires to commune to make his own decision after pastoral counseling.

One professor contends that it is dubious if a person will receive Christ's body and blood if the sacrament is not administered by an ordained clergyman.

For documentation of these findings see the following excerpts from the transcripts.

Documentation

Prof. Y Transcript

pp. 17-19

COMMITTEE: Well, let me set up a quasi hypothetical situation. Suppose I am pastor of a congregation that has a parochial school and on my staff I have, together with Lutherans, a member of the Reformed Church, and another person who belongs to a Presbyterian church, in which churches they are continuing their membership. But now with our morning devotions from time to time we have an observation of the sacrament. Would I admit them, or would I not? What would the criteria be?

PROF. Y: The answer as to whether a person would—whether I would in that situation or would not—would be, of course, where I was trying to come in terms of that it would involve all of these individual details. I think that the various aspects of what you say there would surely be important in terms of my own analysis of this kind of thing. I think I would start in terms of my own approach to this thing from the reality of the church, or, to say it in another way, the significance of the fact that anybody who calls Jesus Christ the Lord and Savior Son of God, who has through His action brought forgiveness in life and salvation and has given us this sacrament in which He says, "This is My body;

this is My blood,"—anybody who holds that in terms even as general as that is significantly my brother. I think I want to start with that kind of a thing. Then you start going through this other process of the specifics of a Lutheran confession, and you hold that in tension with the church, and then, I think, in the immediate situation all kinds of factors begin to play in. You would certainly not be able to say that a person who has membership in a Reformed church is thereby automatically one who holds all those teachings which are in the confessions of that Reformed church. So there is an individual kind of situation there. I think that apart from that there are all kinds of individual things that are involved in whatever pastoral thing is there. It would be very hard for me to say right or left. I surely would not be, in terms of my own conviction, ready to say that because a person is this or because he is that there would be no circumstance in which I would want to be a part of the expression of our common faith in Jesus Christ, membership in the church, by participation in the Lord's Supper. If there were ever an instance in which this particular kind of thing would be an expression of the denial of the importance of any of these things, I think one would very necessarily have to avoid it; and I think that you ultimately come to the place

where any kind of a continuing practice in the way you set this up would pretty well put one into that bind. But I could imagine circumstances in which the individual situation would not have this kind of implication.

COMMITTEE: William Barkley here a couple of years ago, the New Testament man, wrote a little in his in my opinion a very popular style a little monograph on the Lord's Supper where he reaffirmed very vigorously the old Zwingli view and comes down hard and challenges the whole exegetical underpinnings of the doctrine of the Real Presence and brusquely brushes this aside. Now I suppose we would count him as an eminent Christian. Would you feel that he should, if he would apply to receive the sacrament at a Lutheran altar without changing his view on the sacrament, should he be admitted?

PROF. Y: Well, you really — my pastoral approach of course would be to want to talk it through with him, and he would be an antagonist with whom to deal! And you are not going to take care of this problem in terms of five minutes in the sacristy, that is for sure. But where a person, if a person came to me and categorically rejected the fact that the body of Jesus Christ and the blood of Jesus Christ were in the sacrament, I would say that this is a divisive kind of thing.

COMMITTEE: But suppose he puts it in the Calvinistic terminology, which can get very realistic. "We receive the body and blood of Christ," and so forth, but "by our faith mounting to heaven" rather than by Christ communicating His body and blood in, with, and under bread and wine — would that sort of confession qualify him for reception of the sacrament at a Lutheran altar?

PROF. Y: I think that if I were dealing with that kind of a person who was that clear in terms of his antitheses, and he were then made aware of my particular position and the position of the Lutheran Church, I think it would be obvious that we are not dealing with the same sacrament. And as a result it would be a mutual kind of thing. This is the way I would attempt to approach it.

COMMITTEE: Just a minute, in this connection, because you may want to shift to something else. What is the policy regarding this at the seminary? You have a number of people who are not Lutherans who are students there. If they apply for admission to the sacrament —

PROF. Y: The dean of the chapel, as I would understand this, who is of course designated by the president and the dean of students, would be the one who is — the one who normally would be the one who would deal with this in that kind of a pastoral way.

COMMITTEE: Are you acquainted with what is done?

PROF. Y: To the extent that I just said it, yes. Is that what you mean?

COMMITTEE: No, not quite. I mean what decisions have been made — are individuals say of the Reformed persuasion, are these brethren admitted to the altar?

PROF. Y: I can really not speak in specifics other than where there is a situation in which a person has accepted the confessional position of the Lutheran Church on this, and for — now "emergency" is always one of those funny words, in this circumstance is regarded by the dean of chapel as one who is in a fellowship of faith, I think there are occasions when in a pastoral way this is possible. I think to the great joy of many of us that the reality of the church and the unity of faith in Christ and the reception of the body and blood is there, you know, like it is an occasion of three cheers, Something is happening by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Prof. D Transcript

pp. 5-6

COMMITTEE: Now one hears people speak of the Real Presence these days, and sometimes, when you ask them for a definition, it seems to be what they are saying is that Jesus Christ is really present. Now you have stated you believe that this goes beyond that, that the body and blood of Jesus Christ are truly present. Now if someone who designates himself Lutheran comes out with a definition of the real presence that makes it just the real presence of Jesus Christ, but he boggles at the real presence of the body and the blood, do we have a fellowship problem, and how much of a one?

PROF. D: Well, you are setting up a hypothetical case, first of all, which is something of a problem when one would have to know all the facts of the situation if at all possible. You know, I don't want to judge a situation unless I have all the facts of the case before me as to whether or not I would deny his fellowship. The question of fellowship is whether or not essentially someone denies the Gospel, and if somebody in my particular congregation had these problems, I would sit down with him and I would try to make it clear that to be a Lutheran, within the Lutheran tradition, the essence of understanding the Gospel is primary and that we have taken the position that we believe that the body and blood of Christ are truly present, and I would talk with him very seriously about whether or not he understands and is truly one with us as he comes to the sacrament because he has missed that greatest understanding, greatest gift of the mystery of the sacrament.

COMMITTEE: Well I am thinking particularly, let us say, of the intersynodical relationships that if a definition of the Real Presence in terms of the real presence of Christ, quite to the neglect of the real presence of Christ's body and blood, is promulgated and tolerated, does this constitute something of a fellowship problem in your thinking?

PROF. D: Yes. It would be difficult. It would have to be handled. I don't know; I would have to be on the committee and find out precisely what the definition of the other party was before I would pass any kind of judgment, but I would say, yes, you would have to — really have to study that question and make sure that there wasn't in their understanding of it something that conflicted with the essence of the Gospel.

Prof. I Transcript

pp. 25-26

COMMITTEE: Since you are on the point of the sacrament from *Liturgy and Renewal*, Valparaiso University, 1968, "Holy Communion, Goal or Means for Church Unity," you make several statements in here which I think might just lead us to ask a question. Let's just take the conclusion. You indicate that until there is a consensus that makes separate denomination no longer necessary intercommunion should be delayed. You then go on to say that council does not demand a rigid practice of closed communion. It is possible to commune other than Lutherans or at Lutheran altars, and you make reference to the Galesburg rule and you say to summarize the church is one and divided, God has demonstrated that Christians of other denominations have as much right to —. But the particular question I am leading up to here: On the basis of this, do I take it from this that you are in disagreement with the Missouri Synod position on closed Communion?

PROF. I: No, indeed not. The Missouri Synod position allows for the possibility of exceptions.

COMMITTEE: On what basis would these exceptions be made?

PROF. I: On a pastoral basis.

COMMITTEE: Under what circumstances?

PROF. I: It depends on the circumstances. It depends on the pastor.

COMMITTEE: Well, what would you consider to be an acceptable circumstance?

PROF. I: Oh, I guess it could be a wide variety of things. I suppose it sometimes happens that a person who is a member of another church body will come to a pastor as a visitor in his congregation in a community and ask for the privilege of receiving Holy Communion with the congregation. And the pastor will talk with him about his faith and especially his faith about the Savior, especially his faith about the sacrament, and if he is satisfied that the man is O. K., he will commune him.

COMMITTEE: This would be a visitor who happens to be in the community, maybe visiting his uncle or aunt on a Sunday morning, and wants to go to Communion; he says, "Yes, I believe that Christ is truly present in the sacrament." Under those conditions you think that he may be communed.

PROF. I: I think so.

COMMITTEE: So you are not limiting it to emergency situa-

tions or things of that nature. It seems also that you indicate here that the sacrament may be a way of producing unity rather than something which one celebrates together after the unity is established.

PROF. I: It is a way of building unity.

Prof. X Transcript

pp. 18-19

COMMITTEE: We should get on another topic. I think what we're trying to get at is: Do you feel that (I mean I think you could debate all night whether or not that's adequate), but if an individual has a Zwinglian viewpoint or a Catholic viewpoint or a Lutheran viewpoint, do you think that under the—you mentioned various things, everybody should go to his own shepherd, and so forth—but would you have any objection basically under a circumstance of communing with someone who felt that the Zwinglian viewpoint was correct, or transubstantiation was correct?

PROF. X: Oh, I suppose I always do. I suppose I would shudder to think of the answers that I might get if I asked all the people that go to Communion what their view is; but whether you're asking whether I would tolerate this or say it's fine, that's a different story. No, I wouldn't. But then on the other hand, do you have to say everything at once? See, some of my statements tonight are going to be fragmentary, they won't be complete; and taking them, they'll probably be inaccurate, and there must be some errors in what I've said too, so I wouldn't tolerate a Zwinglian doctrine. This was Walther's great struggle with Schmucker; Schmucker was thoroughly Zwinglian.

COMMITTEE: I think the question is: This kind of an open invitation for people who might hold varying viewpoints of what the Lord's Supper really is and the matter of the presence, can you have intercommunion with them?

PROF. X: You probably do have Communion like this with people if you have a large church; it's going to happen all the time. But what I would try to do, I would see to it that there would be enough instruction to tell the people that either they should get more instruction or get more information, or at least enough to know what Communion means to us.

COMMITTEE: Let me just sharpen it a bit, then I think we should move on again; we're trying to cut it short. Would you have any objection to you and the local Methodist minister getting together and having an intercommunion service? I mean as a Lutheran pastor, could you do this, would this be all right? Now let's not worry about Synod's rules or anything like that, let's just say basically it would be your problem.

PROF. X: I'm trying to answer these questions on the basis of my relationship to Christ, irrespective of synod, and my answer under those circumstances would be no. And I would agree with X here. X, at one time, at—in other words, if a Communion service is arranged to see who can go with whom, I don't go to Communion for that purpose. I go to Communion to receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ; I don't go to see whether I can get by with this or whether I can get by with that. Now if you say: Would you go with a Methodist under certain circumstances? my answer would be yes; but there would be some circumstances there, but it would always, I would try to live by my principles.

Prof. Z Transcript

pp. 20-21

COMMITTEE: What measure of fellowship do you think we can allow ourselves and still be Lutheran with reference to communing other individuals who have different viewpoints of the significance of the Lord's Supper, let's say either Zwinglian or Roman, or whatever? In other words, can you imagine a circumstance in which I and a Catholic priest could together celebrate the Lord's Supper?

PROF. Z: I would say as a general rule I would want to first of all emphasize the fact that we are a confessional church and therefore . . . do participate with other confessional churches in some understanding of close Communion. That is, it is for those who make the same basic confession that we do. Now therefore normally, if any other person who is not a member of the church that I belong to in terms of confession making would want to receive for some reason

Holy Communion at an altar which I was celebrating as pastor, I would always want the opportunity to talk with that person beforehand and to inquire from him why it was he wanted to receive Holy Communion from us, what were his personal beliefs about Holy Communion; and then I would try to point out to him where we stand, what we believe happens in the Sacrament of the Altar; and if at the end of that conversation I felt that he at least recognized that when he received Holy Communion he was truly eating and drinking in, with, and under the bread and wine the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and that in that eating and drinking he was receiving the forgiveness of sins for his life and for his salvation, I would then say, "Well, this is our problem with close Communion; I am going to leave it up to your conscience to decide whether or not you want to come to my altar." I feel finally it has to be the individual's decision to make, but I think it is my responsibility to fence the table. However, I also understand that Holy Communion is one of the means that God has given us to strengthen unity, and I am talking about a strictly hypothetical situation. I could imagine that some Roman Catholic and Lutheran theologians maybe have been in dialog about the sacrament for months on a very close, intimate basis and feel constrained in that moment to celebrate it together to help them in their own searching. I suppose this may have a blessing and a benefit attached to it. I would not want to pass negative judgment on it. In my own ministry I have been very careful about this because I recognize what we mean by close Communion, and I have always tried to fence the table. But ultimately it is up to the individual, and if he comes after our discussion and I know that he believes in the true presence, I would not refuse him. If, however, he indicated that he did not, that he was a Zwinglian, then I would simply pass him by.

Prof. L Transcript

p. 15

COMMITTEE: With reference to Article VII of the Augsburg Confession, our church in terms of its position on unity and fellowship and so on without compromising the Gospel. You are connected with or dean of the chapel or some such position at the seminary. What do you do with individuals who are attending and are not Lutheran and would like to attend the Lord's Supper . . . Reformed people?

PROF. L: It has happened twice in the ten years that I have participated. I understand there was one instance; I don't know if anyone presented themselves; a sort of open invitation was given by my colleague last summer, when I wasn't on the place; this caused a little misunderstanding; it has happened twice, and we catechised the person very closely as to his understanding of Holy Communion to see whether he is, in terms of First Corinthians 10 to 11, qualified to receive without detriment to himself, and above all whether he is a person, he or she, a member of our community; because as I understand Holy Communion, it is never merely that we receive forgiveness of sins but that we share in the body of Christ, which is the people. And if you are not sharing that way, you had better not mess around with our sacrament. This doesn't happen very frequently.

Prof. J Transcript

pp. 30-31

COMMITTEE: This is just one more quickie that I wanted to cover under your *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue, IV, Eucharist and Ministry*, page 105. "The symbolical books imply that the celebrant of the sacrament of the altar will be an ordained clergyman." And "quoting Luther"—and then you have some references—"quoting Luther approvingly, 'the priests who administer it.'" You have a footnote on the case of John Sutel of Göttingen, who "makes it clear that in the mind of the early Lutheran community the mere possession of a call without a public ordination through the laying on of hands did not authorize the recipient to preside at the eucharistic assembly and pronounce the formula of consecration." Is this your position today, that a person who is, has been called but not ordained really ought not to preside over the eucharistic assembly?

PROF. J: Yes, unqualifiedly.

COMMITTEE: Would you care to say why it is? Is it something that the ordination does that the call doesn't do for him?

COMMITTEE: Would you say what it is, please?

PROF. J: Yes.

PROF. J: Yes. He is given the—I developed this at very considerable length, beginning on pages 113 through 116, as to the reasons why I think that this is a symbolical necessity. It is the—as the rite of ordination in our own circles clearly indicates, it is at the point where the individual is being ordained that the ordinator says to him, “I now commit unto thee the office of proclaiming the word of God and administering the sacraments and I ordain and consecrate thee a minister of the church of Christ, in the name of the Father and of the Son [and of the Holy Spirit].”

COMMITTEE: Is this a matter of order or a matter of apostolic succession, or what is the theoretical basis for this?

PROF. J: Well, “apostolic succession” is a term that is capable of definition in a variety of ways. St. Jerome talks about an apostolic succession of priests, and I would feel that this is something that we have. I would also assert that this is a part of the normal way. I am not ready to assert that in every conceivable instance this is the only possible way. I am not imposing any limitations upon the work of God’s Holy Spirit, but the reasons that [—

COMMITTEE: [In other words] if someone were to do this who was not ordained, would there be a sacrament there, would the Lord’s body and blood be—?

PROF. J: I would not receive at that celebration; let me put it that way. I am not called upon to pronounce on a situation of that kind unless I am responsible. If I were respon-

sible, then an unordained person would not consecrate the elements. And I think this is a position which the church very clearly takes.

COMMITTEE: That may well be a matter of what some people consider decency and order, you apparently something beyond that. What I am saying is just the question: Does the fact that I am ordained or not ordained have anything to do with the efficacy of the words of the sacrament if I use the words of the Savior in connection with the celebration?

PROF. J: I would say, I would be dubious in that case. I mean you are citing a concrete instance of an unordained person consecrating the Holy Eucharist. I would be dubious, I am not saying it is not, I am not saying it is, I am saying I am dubious about the body and blood of Christ being there. And I am dubious on, I believe, solid symbolical grounds, and I would submit, also Biblical grounds, although the Biblical demonstration would be a rather complicated thing. I would say a person, say a lay person, at a service of this kind would quite conceivably be receiving the grace of forgiveness. In the same way in that classic instance where Luther discovered that a baby has been baptized with wine because the maid reached up into a cupboard and got the wrong carafe and the child was baptized, without his tending to suggest that you ought not to use water. I would certainly feel that if these people who receive in good faith receive forgiveness of sins and life and salvation.

COMMITTEE: But not necessarily the body and blood of the Lord.

PROF. J: That is right.

5 f, 7. Permissiveness: The Curriculum as Related to Doctrinal Concerns

The Fact Finding Committee did not concern itself extensively with curricular matters. However, the report of the Theological Education Research Committee (TERC), a report of a task force of Synod’s Board for Higher Education, was submitted to the Fact Finding Committee by one of the faculty members.

It should be noted that the TERC report recommends that LCMS ministerial students should have the option of taking up to one year of their 3-year seminary residency training at a seminary of another church body. No restriction is placed on the denomination or doctrinal position of that seminary. It is required that it be accredited by the American Association of Theological Schools.

The church will have to decide if its ministerial students are to be permitted this exposure to seminaries of other denominations. The issue is more crucial in view of the fact that an increasing number of the men being admitted to the St. Louis Seminary have had no contact with Synod’s junior colleges, senior college, or teachers colleges.

The recommendations of the TERC report have not been adopted by the Board for Higher Education of the Synod. It should also be noted that the committee contained representatives outside of the St. Louis Seminary. Its philosophy is, however, defended by the seminary professor interviewed, and thus it is included in the Fact Finding Committee report.

Documentation

From Report of Theological
Education Research Committee

pp. 181-183

ASSUMPTION NO. 11 — *Theological Education in an Ecumenical Age*

It is becoming increasingly evident that changes in the style of confessionalism and the growth of ecumenical engagement both call into question the traditional pattern of

seminary education. On the larger scene the whole educational apparatus of seminaries segregated from all other Christians in total sectarian isolation and instructed wholly by a faculty of a particular persuasion is coming to look more and more like an anachronism rather than an instrument designed to serve the needs of the contemporary church.

In its Mission Affirmations The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has already expressed its conviction that the local congregation of believers, as well as groupings of be-

lievers in denominations, must be in mission to all parts of the body of Christ, actively seeking to discover and recognize the unity they have with other local communities and groupings, and must themselves be willing to be the object of mission from other parts of the body in readiness to follow the Holy Spirit's guidance.

Because of this understanding of the mutual relationship of the parts of the body of Christ to each other, we have come to look upon the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church not primarily as standards by which we exclude ourselves from others or as walls of separation, but as witnesses to the activity of God in Christ.

The doctrine of baptism and the doctrine of justification by grace through faith must have the necessary result that we recognize as fellow Christians, and as fellow members of the body of Christ, all those in whom the Holy Spirit has created life and faith, even as He has in us.

Lutheran seminary communities will then be ready to listen to and speak with those who differ from them, and will be ready to establish suitable ecumenical experiences which will make this possible, so that all who have been called by God through faith in Christ will help each other to grow in Christ.

(a) In an ecumenical mix the relationship which the various people have with each other is based upon the act of God by which He has created saving faith in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. When Lutheran students attempt to understand the ways through which the Holy Spirit has created faith, and when they are encouraged to articulate those truths which they know, to which they have given assent, and through which they rest their confidence on Christ, then they will have the opportunity to exercise the obligation placed on them to witness and to listen to other Christians, so that all may grow in faith.

(b) The ecumenical mix provides a framework within which Lutheran students can make bold, positive, evangelical use of their confessional heritage, while at the same time being humbly willing to listen to fellow members in the body of Christ.

This kind of educational milieu can heighten the realization of faculty and students that men are preparing to subscribe to the Lutheran confessions and to exercise their ministry under those confessions. It can also strengthen their conviction that they as faculty and students have a distinct confessional contribution to make to the current ecumenical dialogue at every level.

At the present time perhaps not every Lutheran seminarian understands his confessional identity adequately when he first begins his seminary career, and hence he may not be prepared either to gain sufficiently from the ecumenical dialogue or to make a significant contribution to it.

This would imply that certain aspects of the seminarian's work, especially in the first year, would ordinarily be done at his confessional seminary and under those professors.

The goal must always be more than simply cross-registration or other arrangements which permit Lutheran seminarians to elect certain courses at other institutions. For example, to achieve the goal

- (a) at the local level certain aspects of field education and common courses ought to be designed and offered jointly by cooperating theological institutions to provide ecumenical breadth and depth; and further,
- (b) up to a third of a seminarian's course requirements (with the exception of externship) could conceivably be taken under the auspices of another theological institution accredited by the American Association of Theological Schools.

It is to be understood that the student will work out his program in consultation with appropriate advisers.

The AATS suggests educational objectives for what it considers a fully adequate seminary education in this ecumenical age. Such education, the Association holds, will not be possible unless students planning to enter the ministry

- (1) can sit together in the same classes and seminars studying that increasing body of Christian knowledge and tradition within which historic confessional differences either are already non-existent or are undergoing radical redefinition;
- (2) have the opportunity in the central or basic portion of the educational program to engage in valid inter-

confessional dialogue about issues which remain the subject of meaningful differences between and within the major traditions;

- (3) have the opportunity to work together in a variety of practical settings of the type which will characterize the ministries which they are preparing to enter; and
- (4) have the opportunity to develop a common life in conjunction with formal instructional settings and processes which will facilitate the fullest personal realization of the ecumenical educational experience.

(*Theological Education*, IV [Summer 1968], 768.)

The AATS educational objectives are not of a prescriptive nature. They do not pretend to be the final word, but they do chart a general, positive course. Some local attempts to implement these goals are already in operation and need continued close watching and evaluation. Admittedly there are risks inherent in any changes in this direction. No "best" way has yet been found to meet the challenge posed by the ecumenical age. Whatever answers and assurances we need are likely to emerge only as a result of search, testing, and experience, not before.

It should be noted that the positive gains of theological education in an ecumenical environment are not only to be found in the area of mutual edification, witnessing to each other, and the strengthening of relationships with other Christians for the sake of God's mission to all people. This ecumenical environment can be a positive factor also in eliciting a mature and firm commitment to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments in the Church of the Augsburg Confession. Such a commitment, instead of being made in denominational isolation which sometimes leads to a nonreflective, purely formal decision, is tested by the experiences of the ecumenical environment and clarified by confrontation with other confessional approaches. Such a commitment can better be built on confessional identity than on confessional conformity.

Revised 4/13/70

Prof. Z transcript

pp. 13-17

COMMITTEE: Could you expatiate on the ecumenical mix, a couple of striking terms, for instance on page 63 if my scratchings are correct and I am reading right?

PROF. Z: O.K. Yes, I would hope that if we could move into this thing that there might be certain courses which would be structured [change tape]. Well suppose I start, I don't know where I just left off there; but this ecumenical mix bit, that I hope that there would, we could move to that point that the seminaries who might be involved in this ecumenical situation would structure maybe a course in which representative students from each of the schools would be involved. That it would keep some kind of a balance and proportion so that one class didn't have just all Lutherans and Roman Catholics and leaving someone else out. That is the first part of the idea of the mix. It is really mixed up. And that then they have the opportunity to think through together maybe some of the really major problems that all Christians face when they think of trying to be Christian with each other. What are the big hangups that we have and that each man be allowed to speak to the problem from his own confessional stance, that he listen to what the other person has to say, and that probably out of this will come at the minimum I would hope better understanding. It would also mean it would provide the seminarian with the opportunity to witness to his own confessional stand, not among people who already agree with him, but among people who really have maybe an honest difference of opinion and who also marshal Scripture and other things in their defense. And so you get in microcosm the kind of thing that I think our clergy have to live with in most of the communities where they are called to serve. That is, with few exceptions, we will be moving into communities that have different denominations represented in the community. And this would be a kind of educational microcosm of that. Now because they are attached to the confessional seminary of their choice, this is the beautiful part, and they always come back home to reflect again on the experiences and to say to the systematics prof, or whoever it might be, "Boy, you know I never thought of that. Help me out. What should I be reading to get a little stronger understanding of what this significance means or they use certain passages that way. I never heard of that

before." And then they can be worked with. You see, this is a kind of give-and-take rather than just working with them and hoping it is all going to work out when they get out there on the firing line. We at least have one or two more chances to work with them back home in developing their own confessional stance. Is that helpful to you?

COMMITTEE: Just in line with that, granting that this kind of dialog ecumenically is helpful. But my concern is—and maybe you can talk to this—that in the midst of this how do we keep our balance in developing not only a Christian consciousness but a Lutheran consciousness when up to a third of his three years is going to be spent in other places and that it may be possible for him to avoid what we like to refer to as the system, so that we are going to have this fellow for precious little time, and my concern is that then we begin to imitate the failures of the rest of Protestantism, which has always looked with such an envious eye at us for the very system that we have and the lack of a pluralistic outlook on everything.

PROF. Z: I suppose we would try to do it the same way we do now because in effect it is not absolutely necessary for a student to have put in all of his time at one of our two seminaries in order to be qualified for the ministry of the church. You have got the colloquy student, for example, who maybe spent all of his theological education somewhere else, and we only require of him one year of residency tops plus the externship under a Missouri Synod supervisor. So that I mean—

COMMITTEE: You would be making the exception to the rule, wouldn't you?

PROF. Z: Well, I just wanted to use it as a prelude that we do have that established practice already. It would seem to be too, that in terms even of students transferring, that many of them could maybe have already in the past, I am not sure, come to us after having done part of their training somewhere else. I think with the kind of educational milieu that I am suggesting your concern would be one of our chief concerns, that there would be a sufficient individual working with the person that you would be able to know as you work with him as to where it is that he really stands and where he needs the most attention. Particularly if he came to us from somewhere else. And I think this would be the fascinating safeguard of the whole thing. Instead of pushing the guy through the kind of cookie-cutter system after a series of interviews and talks and papers and he wouldn't even have—I would even assume he would do his first year there if he would even do it. This is just an option we are holding open. Maybe 10 people out of every 150 will even take it. So many of them are married or the economic pressures and what not to stay where they are is a very strong thing. But I think for some students it might be a very happy option for them to take up to get another perspective in another Lutheran seminary or what have you, come back and work with us. Is that helpful to you?

COMMITTEE: Well, I grant this, X said, we certainly wouldn't want the colloquy system to be used as analogous, and you said you only used it as a prelude. But I am thinking about the whole philosophy. Now you expressed the same concern; I am only questioning whether you are going to be able to do this and whether much of what we read in here does not in effect imitate what has admittedly been a failure in other branches of Protestantism.

PROF. Z: I would hope not. But I hope that it would imitate at least the possibility of individualizing our education more than we have in the past. And that I guess really may be where the accent comes down. Don't lock everybody into

this straightjacket. Give them a little more room within the house.

COMMITTEE: I like your statement that maybe one course or so one term, a shorter term, would be taken at one of these other seminaries, but as I read that the first time at the Council of Presidents meeting, I was somewhat taken aback at the (I don't remember the page where this is found) that out of the three years of seminary training you would spend a whole year—is that the statement that is made at one third—?

PROF. Z: Maybe if the student should desire to do it.

COMMITTEE: I thought that was going overboard.

PROF. Z: Well, it may very well be that in the give-and-take with the College of Presidents and the BHE and etc., that will be tailored. This is simply a suggestion to get the thing going. I personally don't see any great harm or danger in it.

COMMITTEE: But you think, X, that our students are sufficiently theologically mature after one year of theological training or perhaps two (I guess it would be one or two; it certainly wouldn't be three—sufficiently theologically mature that they can pretty well avoid the power of error which they are surely going to hear at some of these other seminaries; some they may not, some they may. You are not concerned about their theological maturity at that point?

PROF. Z: Terribly concerned and that is why I hope I am suggesting an educational . . . which will better take care of that concern than we even presently are able to do, the way we are living right now.

COMMITTEE: How would you do that? I mean, how would that work? You are stating a goal. How would this be effected—just by exposing them to somebody else?

PROF. Z: No, indeed. No, as my dialog back and forth with these two gentlemen, the whole purpose of—one of the purposes of the ecumenical mix is to give the person the opportunity to see what it is really like when you are out there in the world with all of these denominations competing and vying and their particular points of view. Really let you get a good feel of it, you don't get it quite the same way when you read F. E. Mayer's *Denominations*. It becomes an academic exercise. You answer a few questions with the prof, and then you either get an A or a B, and that is it. It is the educational system that I am talking about. I am terribly concerned that we develop the kind of system within which that guy comes back to us and we have the opportunity to work with him on his hangups and his problems and help him toward a more mature stance. I think that is one of the things, too, that in this particular curriculum we are trying to push so hard is the whole model of the professional stance. That is, from the very beginning he must accept a two-thrust responsibility. The responsibility of self-evaluation and continuous evaluation by others. And I would like to see a lot more of that going on than we presently have. I think it is a great mark of a professional pastor. He is always asking some of those basic questions, evaluating his practice in the light of his experience and his theories. And I would like to not tell them about it at the seminary: That is what you ought to be doing when you get out there. I would like to be doing a part of it with them so that maybe, when they get out there, the devil, the world, and the flesh being taken into consideration, he will continue to do something of it. And I think that is where continuing education comes in, which we really don't have in our church at the present time. Then we can look upon the seminary more and more, I hope, as one what how many years' segment of a total lifetime. You never stop in the best sense of that word.

5 g. The Findings Concerning Ordination of Women to the Pastoral Ministry

The Fact Finding Committee did not spend much time or query many professors concerning the topic of the ordination of women. However, in a few instances the topic was covered. Responses were unclear in two instances. In another the position was taken that the orders of creation (man first, then woman) and their theological implications were not permanent. Thus the ordination of women to the pastoral office is regarded as permissible.

In a somewhat related matter, the entire range of the apostle Paul's ethical teachings was treated as being tied to his own time, with the unmistakable inference that modern man is not bound by them on that account.

Cf. Appendix IV: *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, IV, F, "4. The Infallibility of Scripture."

See the following transcripts for documentation on this point.

Documentation

Prof. N Transcript

pp. 9-10

COMMITTEE: Well, I was asking specifically with regard to women clergy and how you view that portion of the Scripture? Whether you think this is exegetical or doctrinal, how this relates to a person's subscription to Scripture?

PROF. N: . . . doctrinal matters and exegetical matters are all very closely related, but the women have valued place in the church. Now this all depends on how we define ordination and how we look at the role of the church as a service. I saw a beautiful picture of the Roman Catholic sisters giving the Communion service to real elderly, run-down, sick patients in hospital bed. I thought it so beautiful! That dedicated sister for the service of the church, to give Communion. Now if we do consider in the case that the giving of Communion by dedicated, consecrated lady like the sisters or deaconess in the church to give Communion and if the churches so require the ordination to allow that kind of person to give that Lord's Supper, then I think there's a valid place that that woman to be ordained.

COMMITTEE: I was thinking of it not so much with the word "ordained," because we could probably ordain anybody we wanted to, but with regard to ordaining into the clergy with the power of the Office of the Keys.

COMMITTEE: To be a pastor.

PROF. N: Now here, Office of the Keys too, in our Lutheran context, certainly Luther always emphasized the importance of pastoral, ministerial office. But this call of the theology of the ministry lies in that doctrine of the universal priesthood, and we, whether we happen to be man or woman, I have the key to forgive his sins by his confession in the name of Jesus Christ. It is my duty to do so, and the lady of the church has a valid ground and a valid place to forgive that sin, by the confession of others. This is a mutual function. I think much of the lady's role in the church and the matter of ordination may be more of cultural reflections. The people who debate on this matter would say this is more exegetical, doctrinal matter than cultural and sociological reflections. But I would clearly say that there are valid grounds of the woman in the church to be ordained as a pastor, if the church so provide an area of which she could serve.

Prof. U Transcript

pp. 25-27

COMMITTEE: O.K. One final question, and then I think we're just about out of time. I think in one of your classes you

have on the list, Krister Stendahl's *The Bible and the Role of Women*. Now in that he makes an interesting statement, the bottom of page 35, top of 36. He's talking about the realistic interpretation and another interpretation. I'm not sure just exactly what name he gives to that. But he talks about the mistake of the so-called static Biblical view, said it displays a serious hermeneutical naivete, which earlier periods do not have. It does not see that the correct description of first-century Christianity is not automatically the authoritative and intended standard for the church through the ages. Now, is he saying here that Paul with reference to, say, the order of creation and so on, saying something that applies to first-century Christianity, but which is now for us passe, and we need not be bound by what Paul says about the orders of creation? 'Cause we've gone on to a new and fuller understanding? I think he quotes Galatians in terms of "there is no . . ."

PROF. U: Yes, I think it should be very clear here, sir, that the words "order of creation" occur neither in Holy Scripture nor in the Lutheran Confessions, and I think that we should say first of all, therefore, it really, I don't think, is within the purview of examining here.

COMMITTEE: Well, I'm interested in is doctrine of Scripture, which I guess would be within the purview.

PROF. U: Now what is the point about the doctrine of Scripture?

COMMITTEE: He says the correct description of first-century Christianity (by that he's talking about Paul's writings; that's in the context here, I'm sure you know) is not automatically the authoritative and intended standard for the church through the ages. Now it seems to me what he's saying here is what Paul said should be done is not necessarily standard for the church through the ages, and he's saying it with reference here, of course, to the status of women in the church; that could well be applied to any other thing that you care to mention, I guess.

PROF. U: Yes, there would be a number of ways to answer that. One way would be to say, of course, that it often takes a good deal of explaining or transference to figure out how Paul's admonitions would fit our particular scene. You know just the structure of the church [change tape] I have forgotten where my sentence was going. Let me see if I can somehow back up. Well, that when you look at South Wisconsin District or Michigan District or Missouri Synod or whatever, there obviously is a lot of water that has gone over the bridge since St. Paul and that the offices we had

in the church and our administration of the church is surely much different, so an initial question you have to face here, I think, is: There are an awful lot of areas in which St. Paul simply said nothing that is very helpful, and I think that we have had to seriously work this through in our church. So for example we have tried to understand what it means when it says that a woman should not teach in church, and you yourself are training women to teach and properly so. So it is decided that the sorts of things that a woman does in a parochial school or Lutheran high school or even at X college is not contrary to what the Bible is talking about.

COMMITTEE: Excuse me, that is fine, I am interested, though, in Stendahl's general approach that he says what may be standard for the first century isn't for ours. Now let me broaden that a little bit. Is it possible, since Paul bases this argumentation on the order of creation: Adam first and then Eve, and on the order of the fall: Eve and then man, then Adam, is it possible that Paul there in terms of his argument is using an argument which had force for its day but doesn't have force for ours and therefore we don't have to accept it?

PROF. U: I was letting my mind wander a little bit, I guess, there.

COMMITTEE: Let me put it another way. Can we correct an apostle? I mean, can we ever say that an apostle is using an argumentation here which was great for his day but for our day isn't meaningful, and therefore what he comes out with is a particular charge to the church we can ignore or modify it as we please?

PROF. U: I think the name of that game is hermeneutics, that each one of us every day of our life wrestles with the problem, what did the admonition of St. Paul and the implications he saw of the Gospel, we ask, "What did he say to Corinth or one of these other churches," and then we say, "Come on, Holy Spirit, help me! What might this mean in my life?" I think that each of us does that dozens of times each day. That is not ignoring the apostle; it is trying to say, "Granted he was right for his day; but we live in such a changed situation, and he has left us really such a brief corpus of literature. It is not even as big as the synodical *Handbook*. We need a lot of help here, and we try to remain faithful to what he was saying, and we realize also that God is still at work in the world and in His church, and He is going to be helping us to see things better and more clearly, I would hope, that the church could count in many ways to do things in a very blessed way and even that they would expect God to bring forth fruit beyond what the New Testament church achieved.

COMMITTEE: Not to prolong this, but I appreciate your answer. Is it possible, though, that Paul or any other writer could make a mistake? Can I now with reference, I guess, to inerrancy —

PROF. U: I wish I knew which question you were asking. Is it possible for Paul to make mistakes? Sure. That is not what you are asking.

COMMITTEE: Well, I am thinking in terms of what was in the corpus of the writing, of course —

PROF. U: As a matter of fact, as I have told you, I find it to be true that Paul, when he witnesses to Jesus Christ, does this inerrantly for me. That is what I would say.

COMMITTEE: But when it is not a direct witness to Christ, there might be error, is that right?

PROF. U: I didn't say that. I believe that what I am trying to say is what I believe, teach, and confess, and that has to do with what Paul is affirming about God and His love for man and Jesus Christ, and in that I find Him to be totally reliable.

Prof. T Transcript

pp. 14-15

COMMITTEE: But what I would like to do is relate this whole question to the question of ordination of women; in a particular statement that you made in the orders of creation — and now forgetting for a minute the question of mutability or immutability of, you know, of the order of creation and so forth — you say on page 3 as you comment on the CTRC analysis, "We will look again later at the fact that there is in the report no attempt made to relate the question to the truth of the Gospel. The argument rests on the fact that the Bible says no." You seem to look with disfavor — and I think that was what I was getting at originally also — that, is the fact that the Bible says no or yes sufficient? Or must we always say this violates the truth of the Gospel?

PROF. T: I haven't read that thing recently.

COMMITTEE: Well, on the question of ordination of women, is it definitive for us to say, assuming we could agree that the Bible says no, is that enough, or must I now show how this impinges on the Gospel? You seem to say it is not enough.

PROF. T: Yah, O. K., and as you all know, in that very same one of those Pauline passages Paul argues with apparently the same amount of weight that women ought not wear, you know, be in church with uncovered heads. So at that point, you know, the Bible says: No uncovered heads in the worship assemblies. For whatever reason the Bible is saying no to that is no longer apparently sufficient for, you know, parish life in America, much less Lutherans, so that one of the things that I can't escape is that our own parish practice at this one particular point finds it is not sufficient that the Bible says no. It in effect seeks to make sense out of that. I suppose that, just to kind of pull the current conversation into context to what we are saying I hear, say, the Office of the Confutation in the 1530s saying it is sufficient if the Bible says so. If the Bible says you get merit from your works, then that is it, because the Bible says so; and I hear Melancthon saying you always have to take every passage and somehow see how it relates to the center. Otherwise you are doing violence to the Word of God Himself, even though you may be accurately quoting a sentence from Isaiah or, you know, the Revelation of St. John. And if that principle that I was just on the one hand opting for, on the other hand saying I haven't seen that the Missouri Synod discussion on the professional role of women in the pastoral office has taken that, has talked that way. Actually this paper is not an . . . for the ordination of women. What I am saying here is: When you just look at that one item called orders of creation, it is my historical researcher's judgment that Lutherans cannot use the order of creation concept and context as a basis for saying: no women in the pastoral office. Now that is my historical judgment, and I seek to document that as best I could in this somewhat hastily put together for a pastoral conference up in the Twin Cities last January.

5h. The Findings Concerning The Third Use of the Law

Lutherans have commonly spoken of the three uses of God's law: as a curb, a mirror, and a guide. The third is the use of the law of God for a Christian as a normative indication of God's will as to what pleases Him and what offends Him, what He would have man do and what He would have man avoid.

We unanimously believe, teach, and confess on the basis of what we have said that, strictly speaking, the law is a divine doctrine which reveals the righteousness and immutable will of God, shows how man ought to be disposed in his nature, thoughts, words, and deeds in order to be pleasing and acceptable to God, and threatens the transgressors of the law with God's wrath and temporal and eternal punishment. For, as Luther says against the nomoclasts, "Everything that rebukes sin is and belongs to the law, the proper function of which is to condemn sin and to lead to a knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20; 7:7). Since unbelief is a root and fountainhead of all culpable sin, the law reproves unbelief also. But it is also true that the Gospel illustrates and explains the law and its doctrine; nevertheless the true function of the law remains, to rebuke sin and to give instruction about good works. (*Formula of Concord*, SD, V, 17-18)

The law of God serves (1) not only to maintain external discipline and decency against dissolute and disobedient people, (2) and to bring people to a knowledge of their sin through the law, (3) but those who have been born anew through the Holy Spirit, who have been converted to the Lord and from whom the veil of Moses has been taken away, learn from the law to live and walk in the law. A controversy has arisen among a few theologians concerning this third and last function of the law. (*Formula of Concord*, SD, VI, 1)

Believers, furthermore, require the teaching of the law so that they will not be thrown back on their own holiness and piety and under the pretext of the Holy Spirit's guidance set up a self-elected service of God without his Word and command, as it is written, "You shall not do every man whatever is right in his own eyes, but heed all these words which I command you. You shall not add to it nor take from it" (Deut. 12:8, 28, 32). (*Formula of Concord*, SD, VI, 20)

In much of contemporary theology there is a tendency to ignore the third use of the Law and to teach or imply that the Christian in the "freedom of the Gospel" does not need the Law as a guide for Christian conduct. This position is related to a doctrine condemned by our Confessions as "antinomianism" (which literally means "against the Law") and would open the door to the nonnormative, situational approach to Christian ethics so current in our society today. The committee therefore explored the third use of the Law with the faculty.

The findings range from confusion and ambiguity to a rejection of the third use of the Law as a positive ethical guide for Christians. This opens the door to the introduction of "situation ethics."

Cf. Appendix IV: *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, Section II, "Law and Gospel."

For illustration of the position of several seminary professors see the following transcripts:

Documentation

Prof. BB Transcript

pp. 8-11

COMMITTEE: In your outline of Lutheran faith to the folks at Maryville College you have a number of items which you mention, and I notice that you start by the first use of the Law and demands made by men upon men as they live together in society, the failure of men to meet the demands

made upon them, the second use of the Law, the demands are God's demands, and God judges failure in meeting the demands, the Second Table of Decalogue and also the Third Table—

PROF. BB: First.

COMMITTEE: First Table, I'm sorry, I misread. Now the Con-

fessions also speak of the third use of the Law, maybe I missed it here. Do you include that somehow in these first two, or it just didn't happen to fit into your purpose at that time, or would you care to comment on that?

PROF. BB: Well, third use of the Law, of course, is a kind of concern that one gets to when you are talking about persons who are already Christian. In what you were reading this is that which sets up the conflict for me and my existence for God to break through. When I become a Christian, then am I free from any constraints upon me, or do I have constraints that, however one chooses to say it, command me to live my life in a given way? Article VI of the Formula tackles this and is trying to overcome an antinomian claim that one is so completely free in the Gospel that the field is wide open and I can do what I will, and yet in trying to get at it finally the confessors say that, insofar as I am a sinner, the Law continues to apply to me, and I understand that to be saying that, even as a Christian, when God's demand comes to me and I feel it, the net effect is judgmental, and that brings me to my knees, so that the Gospel is renewed and refreshed and renews my life. So that, functionally speaking, what it does to people is the same as that of what we ordinarily call the second use of the Law, and in that way, since I can find little evidence to support in the Confessions any terminology that speaks about the third use of the Law but I do find that God's demands still applies to Christians, that is the way in which it is understood by me in its effect upon persons, so that the effect of the Law, or God's demands on Christians, is the same as that which brought them to be cracked open for the Gospel in the first place, and we live in this continuing dialectic.

COMMITTEE: You are saying it is a judgmental function then.

PROF. BB: Exactly. I am *simul justus et peccator*, and this continues both to judge me, so that I am open to a "flip" in my perception of reality that includes the resolution of God's great grace in Jesus Christ.

COMMITTEE: In the Solid Declaration, VI, third function of the Law, the confessors say in the Latin *lege docentur*, they are instructed by the Law that they may live and walk in genuine piety. Now would you say that this "they are taught by the Law that they may walk in piety" is a purely a judgmental thing or that they simply learn or beyond this that they learn from the Law what God's will is? I mean being imperfect and not knowing perfectly, or do you think they don't really need the Law to know what God wants them to do?

PROF. BB: I think Law is being used in two senses. I would hold this as analogous to Paul's use of Law in Romans that in the chapters preceding, say Romans 13, Paul is using Law in the judging, condemning kind of sense, the dead end sort of thing that does not justify, but in Romans 13:10, 11 he is speaking here of "love is the fulfilling of the Law," and I take this to mean the same way that the confessors at the beginning of Article VI of the Formula are saying there is one immutable will of God for everyone, that one immutable will of God is that persons should live as His children in obedience to His will. Therefore, for those who are disobedient, recalcitrant, do not recognize Me as Lord there is a judging which must take place, and they must realize it so they are open to the promise, and in that promise then they can live the kind of lives in a freedom that opens them up to all kinds of possibilities with their neighbor and everyone else. Do you understand what I am getting at? Law is then used in the sense of the overall will of God for all persons. This is what He wills for all persons. But Law secondarily in a narrower sense is used in a judgmental way. Paul does this also, and I think one needs to be careful as to how he is using it.

COMMITTEE: Doesn't Article VI, though, also in addition to saying insofar as we are flesh we need the Law, as you have indicated before, but also so that no one should go about in setting up their own rules of conduct, the Law is necessary? Isn't this also a second point of Article VI in the third use of the Law in an instructional sense, not simply a judgmental sense? Or don't you read it that way?

PROF. BB: I frankly, it was some time ago that I very carefully looked at that, especially in connection with adult pre-membership instruction. I don't recall that point.

COMMITTEE: And I can't find the quote —

PROF. BB: I do know that Luther's insistence is that under the Gospel now I become free to do or not to do as the Spirit of God moves me toward my neighbor and his need. That there is a great deal said about the necessity and the openness of the good works. Well, the confessors had to meet that one head on too. They are not too specific in what these looked like. But in a way I think that is very good because the Spirit of God moves men in an open way towards the need of neighbor which takes many shapes, which can be different for your life than for mine.

COMMITTEE: This particular one, which is paragraph 20: "Believers, furthermore, require the teaching of the law so that they will not be thrown back on their own holiness and piety and under the pretext of the Holy Spirit's guidance set up a self-elected service of God without his Word and command, as it is written, 'You shall not do every man whatever is right in his own eyes, but heed all these words which I command you. You shall not add to it nor take from it.'" They go on and develop this concept that, when we ask ourselves now what is good, the Gospel motivates us to do that which is good, but when we ask what is good — what they are saying here is that you look to the Law, and here you find in the Law a statement of God as to what is His will and what is good, which is in opposition to what our own holiness and piety may be. Would you agree with the confessors at that point, or do you think we are not understanding them rightly?

PROF. BB: I would interpret that to mean that I don't set these things up, because the inherent danger is always that I will assume then that I am pleasing God in my own way but that His will bores in on me again and says, "Quit kidding yourself. You as human being are an individual who needs that which is external to you to both judge the weakness and failure of you and to guide that which you are to do as far as My will and purpose in your life is concerned."

Prof. O Transcript

pp. 4-6

COMMITTEE: Let's move to something a little more specific. What you said on your personal witness triggered the question when you talked about the church's ministry to you as an individual child of God, listening to the Law as you needed it. In connection with the article last year, "Freedom in Christ, Gift and Demand," and you trace there Paul's use of the Law in the two passages in Romans and in Galatians, and you say something to the effect that the Law belongs to the past. Where do you see the use of the Law today? I know that was just a bald statement in context, but where do you see the use of the Law, especially the third use of the Law in connection with Article VI of the Formula?

PROF. O: All right, let's back up. You started from the article. Let's stay there for a minute; you have read it more recently than I. That article is a description — let me start a different sentence. That is not a statement of the function of Law in theology. That article is a description of the Pauline use of the term *nomos* and —

COMMITTEE: My question was not specifically to the article, but your own viewpoint.

PROF. O: O.K. Let me — since Paul is part of the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures (it's a good place to start) — it's a surprising thing that St. Paul never once motivates human action out of the Law. He clearly regards the Law as a force in salvation history as belonging to that period prior to Christ, as in Galatians. Does that mean, you know, that Paul says, "Well, the Law has no effect at all for me the Christian"? There I would answer no. As Christian I am *simul justus et peccator*, and in Lutheran theology that does not mean I am *partim justus* and *partim peccator*. I'm not kind of a schizophrenic, this half Christian, this half not, but I am *totus peccator* at all times and I am *totus justus* at all times, one and the same person, completely sinner and completely just. What does that mean about the function of the Law? My teacher of dogmatics (the one who really impressed me) was F. E. Mayer; and I will never forget F. E. Mayer's constant repetition *lex semper accusat*, the Law always accuses. Does that give then the Law a minimalist function? I say no. It gives it a tremendously powerful function. In fact, I think one could say that the procla-

mation of the Gospel really is dependent upon the proclamation of the Law. But what does this mean about Christian ethics? Do I not use the Law then to tell me what to do, the third use of the Law? I would say there is a sense in which I would make that statement. I do not use the Law to tell me what to do, because the Law, even the Decalog, is not comprehensive enough. The moment one has Law, if you really mean Law, you can bargain with it, you can get in casuistic arguments, whereas the Pauline view of life as a life lived in the Spirit, Romans 8, he makes the statement that you περιπατεῖν κατὰ πνεῦμα, according to the Spirit, and that κατὰ phrase is the standard phrase in first-century ethics for introducing the norm of life. The Spirit is a more comprehensive guide. Now, if you ask me: Does the Spirit somehow or other work over here, and here's the Law, and there's no contact? No. As Christian, who has heard the Gospel, who lives in the Spirit, I would say the Spirit takes me right back to those, if you will, ten words. I, as a pastor, one of my obligations at Chapel of the Cross is to teach the Adult Information Forum, Confirmation Class, two fifteen-week sessions a year. Certainly, when we get to the realm of the Christian life, we go back to the Decalog. But I think there's a fundamental difference in the way a Christian does this and the way a giver of Law does it, and that would be what I would see coming out, if I make the application to our lives.

COMMITTEE: Well, it has its application then for us, and I'm thinking especially also as the guide when the confessors say: Insofar as we are still sinful people, that no one should run around now and without any guidelines whatsoever; the Law serves this way.

PROF. O: Oh, certainly.

COMMITTEE: I have a question of my own that I want to ask, but first on this yet: I believe you said Paul never motivates conduct with the Law. Does he direct conduct with the Law?

PROF. O: Not directly. There, this is one of those surprising things in Paul, you know. The New Testament keeps playing what I like to tell students are grave jokes on us, because you start thinking along a certain line, you say now it ought to come out this way, and then you read the New Testament carefully and it doesn't. Let me give an example. Where does Paul actually mention the Decalog and cite it? I know from off the top of my head only two places, in the parenetic section of Romans and in Ephesians. And it's in Ephesians where he cites the Fourth Commandment, and he cites it precisely to make the point that this is the first commandment with promise; and as I read Ephesians, he takes that word promise and uses it in the sense of the promise of the Gospel. He doesn't motivate life out of the Law; he never says you do something to conform to a standard; but he (if I can use a Shibboleth) says, "Look what has happened to you. Put off the old man, put on the new man. Live like that new man you have been made in your baptism." This is what I would mean by saying that, if you take Paul seriously, his injunctions for the new life are far more comprehensive than simply Law. There's no area of life that can be unaffected by that.

COMMITTEE: Does Luther's hymn (what is it in German?) *Dies sind die heil'gen zehn Gebot*, does that fit into the pattern of your understanding of Paul here?

PROF. O: I don't know if I could answer that one without looking at the hymn. I—

COMMITTEE: I believe the English translation goes on to say something that man a godly life might live or lead.

PROF. O: Oh, good! Paul, you know, Romans 7; "The Law is good, the commandment is holy and just and good." Paul is not, and I see him there together with Luther, the Law was given as one of God's good gifts; it was not given to kill. But as Paul looks at his own life and looks at the world around him, he says that's what has happened. In other words, if I say it another way, Paul is not theorizing when he describes the Law, but he's looking at the world about him and says: Look what happened! And it's for that reason that Paul actually puts the Law together with sin and death as one of the three great enemies that has to be overcome by Christ.

Prof. T Transcript

pp. 17-21

COMMITTEE: In connection with determining what is good or what is bad as you analyze the various situations, would you care to tie in your viewpoint on the third use of the Law relative to that in terms of giving guidance to Christians as to what indeed is God's will?

PROF. T: On the third use of the Law I stand on my confessional commitment in the Book of Concord, Formula of Concord, which says you can use the phrase *tertius usus legis* but you are not referring in *tertius usus legis* to a third thing, a third function of the Law fulfilled that is different from function number one and function number two, but you are focusing, if you will, on a third place, where the Law still fulfills its first two functions. Now that is what I understand are the—

COMMITTEE: How would you phrase that, put that in your own words, relating that to the life of a Christian?

PROF. T: *Usus* one. One *usus* is *politicus* in our shorthand; another *usus* is *usus theologicus*. I will translate the word *usus* as function of Law because it is God's law, God's operational work in the world functions; *theologicus* to be the *Hammer des Gesetzes* to condemn me: *lex semper accusat*. That is one of the functions that God's law fulfills, and it happens by a lots of ways, one of which is this table right now where I am being put under critical evaluation. I am in your presence, I acknowledge as you do too, that you are God's agents in this job for critical evaluating and I guess God's critical needle, you know, at home with my wife and kids and with colleagues and my boss and lots of things, so that God's *lex semper accusat* is happening all over the place through many of these channels. The *usus politicus* is this positive thing, this statement about how God functions through social structures, marriage, family, economic systems to keep His creation going and to keep it from just going back to chaos as well as to keep it caring for each other. In that sense *usus politicus*, the *polis*, the city, the society God, if they don't even want to do it willingly, God sort of tricks them into at least giving minimal care to one another, so that some kind of preservation at least takes place, and if a guy refuses to support his wife and kids, he will be hauled into court and compelled to support his wife and kids, even though that is not an ideal kind of husband or an ideal kind of father, but at least that is minimum survival, minimum preservation. That is what I understand to be the two functions of the Law, and when the Formula of Concord talks about: Does that Law have a place of operation in the life of the man who now trusts Jesus Christ?, the confessors there say, "Yes, it does; and if you want to call it *tertius usus*, O.K. But remember, what the Law is doing there is not something unique, some third new thing, but it is just fulfilling the first two functions on the guy who is a Christian. He still has to be accused because he still is *peccator*, and he still lives in the fabric of society, and so he has to be shown and told and called to be that responsible citizen or father or teacher or—

COMMITTEE: Does he need that Law to guide him in terms of his Christian living, in terms of giving him light as a lamp unto his feet, in terms of what God wants him to do, or is he, as a person who has become a Christian with his Christian nature despite the old man who remains, so guided by the Spirit that he doesn't really need the Law as a guide for Christian living? I am not talking about the coercion of the political state, I am not talking about the fact he needs to be reminded constantly that he sins. But does he need the Law to tell him what indeed is God's will lest he perhaps developed his own ideas as to what is God's will and so forth and may stray in that connection? Is that a legitimate function still for the Christian?

PROF. T: If I understand you correctly, I find it difficult to make that notion that the Law as a guide, sort of positive ethical guide for the one who is a Christian, to get that into an easy congruence with much of the so-called *parenesis* in St. Paul's epistles, his "I encourage you, I exhort," that kind of stuff. And if you are thinking then, focusing on the Law as an ethical guide, as an almost kind of personified as a helper to assist me, you know, whisper in my ear when I have a problem, I hear Paul specifically in the big epistles, Romans and the Corinthians letters and Galatians saying, "You know as Christians you have a much better one: we

have Christ Himself, or we are being led by the Holy Spirit," so that if you ask the question of Paul: "What is the unique guide for the Christian in his life of good works, in his living the faith out where he happens to be in God's placement as husband, father, citizen, or what not?" Paul, my guess is, would always say, "Well, there are two different ways that—that specify the new guide you guys got, and that is the living Christ, who is in you; it is not primarily your new nature." I don't find Paul ever saying, "You guys have a new nature, and you can kind of just look, peek back, and look at that nature, and therefore you will get better insights." But he always refers to Christ Himself, or the guide itself, the leadership of the Holy Spirit: "You are led by Spirit," that big scene in Galatians 5:6. And that is what makes it difficult for me to come back, to get back to what supposedly was a traditional *tertius usus legis* thing, to the sense I see the New Testament saying, "There are better alternatives that you Christians have than a *tertius* use of the Law."

COMMITTEE: Then what is the real point of the article in the Formula of Concord whether this is true or not, and I am thinking of a quotation like that from Article VI, where it says, since the Law was given to men for these three reasons, and it mentions the other two, and says thirdly "that after they are regenerate and the flesh notwithstanding cleaves to them, they might on this account have a fixed rule according to which they are to regulate and direct their whole life." Now the confessors would not say the power is in the Law or anything you know.

COMMITTEE: Well, they specifically say that what the Gospel does here in terms of the dynamic and so on, but in addition to what he has said, they say: "Believers, furthermore, require the teaching of the law so that they will not be thrown back on their own holiness and piety and under the pretext of the Holy Spirit's guidance set up a self-elected service of God without his Word and command."

PROF. T: But you must remember what the antithesis is to which the formulators are speaking. That is a blast against monasticism, and that being the Lutheran tradition for 50 years by that time, that the thing that is wrong with the monastics is that they thumb their nose at the Ten Commandments, the Ten Commandments in the sense of the *usus politicus* of God's expressed will on how He wants people to live in His world, so the monastics say, "I don't have to be responsible for my parents anymore. I will get me to a monastery. I don't have to be responsible for marriage and family. I don't have to be economically responsible. I'll live by, you know, the poverty oath." So that the thing that is being pushed in the rhetoric I was using, though, is *usus politicus*, and that comes back to my thesis that there are still these two functions that are being exercised, and these two quotations, at least as I understand them, are Chemnitz, or whoever wrote that section, saying: "Here is how *usus politicus*, God's word for humans in society, how that does indeed still apply to Christians even though they trust Jesus Christ so that they don't wander off onto their own, following some monastic thing.

COMMITTEE: I am not sure monasticism was the thing that they were speaking to 50 years after or 30 years after Luther's death, but whether or not it seemed to me that this sounds a whole lot, this regulating and directing, to the thing that you said before you had difficulty with, namely, the Law talking into our ear and saying this is the way you should go.

PROF. T: Excuse me, then I didn't express myself clearly. The Law always talks into my ear and tells me what God says. The Law is always God's communication to me, and so I don't want to ever deny that. I would say the Law doesn't function as a third, almost as an ally, in the sense of saying, "O.K. I will make my president the law here. O.K. Now that you are a Christian, I the Law am your friend and you are now . . . to me, and I will give you insights as to how you should practice your life." And as Luther said, wondering why the Law can't do that, at least the Decalog, is that there ain't no Jesus Christ in the Decalog. And the only way I live my uniquely Christian life is by constant reference and recurrence to Him, and if the Law of my definition doesn't have that Christus component in it, then already I know ahead of time the Law is going to be insufficient or at least efficient for being my real guide and therefore the Lordship of Christ and the being led by the Holy Spirit. I mean I think Paul is consciously arguing at this point; I mean that Paul is addressing this with both his Corinthians correspondents and his Galatian thing because the Galatian Judaizers want to say: "Look, just because you are Christ's man, the Law still fulfills a friendly function for you." And the Lutheran reformers are clearly criticizing that when they say let's *lex semper accusat*, if the Law ever whispers anything into my ear, there is *accusat* coming in with it.

COMMITTEE: Coming with it, but are you melting together the motivation of the Gospel and the statement of God's will which the Law—the Law does indeed accuse, but the Law does also indeed give us a perfect picture of what God wants us to do.

PROF. T: I disagree with that.

COMMITTEE: You don't think it gives you a perfect picture of what God wants you to do?

PROF. T: Since the Law never tells me to trust Jesus Christ, I am just taking out of the Decalog, to that extent the Law does not you know just by definition.

COMMITTEE: You don't think that is covered by the First Commandment?

PROF. T: No, because don't have any other God than Yahweh, and you know it doesn't mention Jesus Christ. But here is what X was talking about half an hour ago about *solus Christus*. It seems to me either you have to put it in, and then you are rewriting the First Commandment, and I don't suppose you can do that. You get a—

COMMITTEE: Are you saying that you think that the commandments speak to a concept of a God who is not triune then on that basis, that we can't say that one is talking about fearing and loving God above all things and so on, that this makes reference also to the Second Person of the Godhead?

PROF. T: I am not engaging myself in that at all. I think at this point I am being confessional and saying, "When you quote the Scriptures, you have to distinguish between *lex* and *permissio*, and Melancthon at least could not find any *permissio* in the Decalog as he discusses it, nor did Luther in the — either the Large or the Small Catechism. So when you get done with going through all the Ten Commandments, which to be sure he has written about and described in terms of their applicability to people who are Christian, in the Large Catechism he concludes, he says: This is indeed now what God says, and if we really believe that, it would strike terror into our hearts because there is no promise there.

5 i. The Findings Concerning Commitment to the Lutheran Confessions

All professors at the Seminary profess adherence to their ordination vow, which includes commitment to the ecumenical creeds of the Christian church and to the Confessions of the Lutheran Church. The Fact Finding Committee examined the nature of this commitment. A careful examination of the tran-

scripts shows in several instances that the commitment to the Confessions is in fact limited and abridged.

In some instances the professors fail to state that they accept the Lutheran Confessions as a correct interpretation of the Scriptures. Instead they state that they accept them because they are "a living witness to the fact that at that place in the church's life . . . these men confessed Christ in such a way that they maximized His benefits," or because "they bring out to me the evangelical thrust of the Gospel." Thus Gospel reductionism is applied to confessional commitment.

Many faculty members pointed out that their subscription to the Lutheran Confessions applies only to the doctrinal content of the Confessions. The exegetical conclusions of Holy Scripture found in the Confessions are not considered binding. Neither is the line of argument by which a doctrinal thesis is fortified considered to be a part of the subscription to the Confessions.

Doctrine is then defined quite narrowly. For example, according to one professor, it is not necessary to hold that Adam and Eve were the original human pair, originally created in the image of God, who passed their sinfulness on to their offspring, who are then as a result conceived and born in sin. The position is taken that the formulators of Article I of the Formula of Concord were not interested in how a person came to be in the sinful state in which he now finds himself. Instead of this latter item being a part of the doctrine of the Confessions, it is said to be a theological construction or reflection. Hence it is not regarded as something which the Lutheran theologian must believe.

A distinction is also made by some professors at the Seminary between doctrine and theology. Theology is thought of as a system developed for the purpose of proclaiming the doctrine of the Gospel. The position is taken that there may be diversity in theology but not in doctrine. This approach introduces a basic ambiguity. When does a way of expressing something (theological) shade over to the point where it influences or changes the substance of the matter (doctrine)?

The seminary professors in many instances do not accept the Lutheran Confessions' statements regarding Messianic prophecy in the Old Testament. They reject the confessors' hermeneutical approach, in which the Confessions find Christ and His work specifically foretold in the Old Testament books. Likewise they reject the Lutheran Confessions' stand concerning the faith of the patriarchs, wherein the Confessions state that the Old Testament patriarchs were saved by faith in a Messiah to come. Instead these professors indicate that believers in the Old Testament were saved by a general faith in God's blessing and goodness.

The Synod will need to decide if the position taken by the professors vis-a-vis the Lutheran Confessions constitutes genuine subscription. The various approaches described above provide considerable latitude in this respect.

Cf. Appendix IV: *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, Section VI, "Confessional Subscription."

Cf. the following transcripts for material touching on confessional subscription.

Documentation

Prof. F Transcript

p. 2

PROF. F: The Lutheran Confessions are treasured very highly by me as well, partly because I think that they are a living witness to the fact that at that place in the church's life, when it was perhaps especially important to do so, these men confessed Christ in such a way that they maximized His benefits, that they focused on God's action in Him, that they lived by the Gospel, and the Confessions are therefore extremely important to me as well. Now how does this all relate to my role as a teacher? Well, I see myself as training men for the Lutheran ministry, and I hope that, since my specific task is helping them to interpret Scriptures, I hope I do that faithfully, that I help them to see the importance of these documents and take these documents seriously and that I guess I see my teaching in part

at least as a ministry that has many pastoral aspects. I'm happy to have been on the pastoral staff which is responsible for leading the eucharistic services each week in the chapel, and I hope that the classroom and the chapel and my relationship with the students around the place and in my home is one that bears witness also to this affirmation.

Prof. U Transcript

p. 3

COMMITTEE: Thank you very much. Moving on then, as you are a Lutheran pastor, Lutheran professor, you've pledged yourself to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. Do you want to say something about that commitment? What that means to you, as *norma normans, norma normata*, as to sort of a statement of your own, how you view Scriptures, how you view the Confessions?

PROF. U: Yes, I've already treated that, briefly I realize—

COMMITTEE: Excuse me, just to clarify. What, yes, we understand that you subscribe to all the canonical books, but what do you understand those books to be in terms of in what respect are they the Word of God? And in terms of the Confessions, in what respect do you subscribe to them, and are there any limitations or reservations or any problems or whatever?

PROF. U: Yes, as I indicated, I subscribe to these without reservation. I guess primarily because I hear in them or I read in them, I guess I should say, a profound testimony to God and His love for me. I there hear God addressing me with both Law and promise, with both judgment and grace. I find that the Lutheran Confessions, in fact, do bring out to me very clearly the evangelical thrust of the Gospel. That's almost a tautology. I woke up early this morning at six, and knowing this meeting was here, I read the Confessions. I don't often do that, I should say. But I was really struck in reading on the doctrine of Original Sin, both in the Augustana and in the Apology and in the Smalcald Articles, how very clearly that affirmation is made. That the confessors said—and I fully subscribe to this—that man is born without fear of God and without faith and with concupiscence. I find that not only confessionally correct, but as a matter of demonstrable fact, and that were it not for the precious proclamation of the Gospel and God's offer of life in His Son, I would be nothing but a person without fear and without faith and with concupiscence.

Prof. T Transcript

pp. 3-4

COMMITTEE: In connection with this your bond to the Confessions specifically you said not every exegetical point and so forth in reference to Walther's essay. How would you react to the statements in the Confessions that are seemingly quite doctrinal and not exegetical but do not relate directly to the Gospel? I am thinking of things like, well, you can mention quite a few, I am sure, but particularly in the last article of the Formula of Concord, where so many of these sects are mentioned and things like capital punishment. They even speak of things that cannot be tolerated in the church. Now many of those things, like capital punishment, would be difficult to relate directly to the center of the hub or even out to the rim as a distinction between Law and Gospel. Do you feel that you or anyone must and should be bound with such statements in the confessional writings that have no direct bearing upon the Gospel message?

PROF. T: I might question the premise in your question as to, I think, the extent to which there are pieces of the Book of Concord that either do not or cannot be focused into the hub. The one you mentioned on capital punishment, even though it may well be that a given passage in the Book of Concord you have in mind doesn't itself do that insofar as capital punishment is part of the proper work of the civil authorities, Article XVI of the Augustana and of the Apology goes into a rather extended discussion of what nowadays you might call, you know, society and social ethics, and I see that 1530 documents, Apology and Augsburg Confession, actually doing that, so that in my own perspective I would say first of all is it accurate that something that is in the Confession that doesn't, you know, chunk into the center and if I can't see how it links into the center, why then I at least have—I can work with the model I spelled out. If something itself is not shown or cannot be shown to move into the center or to link into the center and if I myself cannot do that either, you know, make the connection, then I have a particular situation on my hands which I see to be similar to many of the situations in those 16th, early 16th century, that if an item cannot be made to relate to the center then you have one of two things on the scene: you either have an adiaphoron, where it doesn't make any difference if you stand yea or nay on a thing, or else you have something that is a competitor with the center and that things got to be checked out if a given position winds you up, in effect, promoting a different wheel with a different hub. The confutation that the Romans tossed back at the confessors at Augsburg seems to me to be one case of a thing like that, and the response then of the Apology to that confutation I think in a couple of cases of particular articles illustrates

that one of my colleagues says they, the Confessions, will not allow an item to remain at a sub-Gospel level. I think X uses that phrase frequently; it seems to me that is compelling. But it is only worth arguing about if you can show that this really isn't just a sub-Gospel issue but it is an issue that is right at the hub, at the center. So on the one hand, for example, monastic vows initially were treated as sub-Gospel, whether there was a, not monastic, but celibate clergy or married clergy, initially it didn't make any difference with reference to the Gospel. However, that issue became a sort of—was elevated to a Gospel level when it was said celibacy makes you a better person than if you were a married person. Then you start getting into soteriology, and alternative Gospel is at least snooping around someplace in the wings. I find the Confessions doing that very often. Sometimes they will take an issue just at a sub-Gospel level and say there is a word of God in the Bible that does not take the Gospel but that is Law that you said don't do it or do it. And on that hand you just say O.K. God said do it or don't do it. But even that is secondary consideration of importance if it doesn't threaten the center, but if it does threaten the center, then it has to be argued on that basis. I kind of wandered around, but these are just kind of the thoughts that come to my mind if I were confronting that kind of question.

Prof. I Transcript

pp. 1-3

COMMITTEE: On pages 10 to 11 I think this is something that you maybe talked about in the *Festschrift*. I only recall seeing it somewhere, but you seem to make this distinction between confessional unity and theological uniformity. Now if you would just explain for my benefit what you see doctrine and theology as apparently two different things. Is theology the broader term? Would you explain that?

PROF. I: Yes. We can even think of what X was saying this morning when he was pointing out that it was his experience that the way many of us developed our theological system was as a result of homiletics. That is in fact true. I was resonating very warmly to what he was saying because it was in fact true for me too. I formed my own system of theology as a result of my efforts to preach. I didn't really learn them in the dogmatics classes at the seminary. I learned them in homiletics courses. And what I am saying is that what I am trying to say by distinguishing between doctrine and theology is that theology is that construct, that system that a man develops for the purpose of proclaiming the doctrine of the Gospel. The doctrine of the Gospel can be expressed in a wide variety of ways. You can talk in Old Testament terms in connection with covenant, or you can talk sacrifice, or, you know, many, many ways of describing this in the Old Testament. In the New Testament I think there are—I said that in the *Festschrift* article—there are different kinds of theologies within the New Testament; that is, the way in which the Gospel of John describes the doctrine of the Gospel is different from the way in which St. Paul describes it, and that is different from the way it is described in the synoptic Gospels, and I would affirm at the same time that they are really describing the same reality, they are all affirming the same thing, and that is the point I am making here, that you have a different theological system from the one I have just because you are you and I am who I am and as a result of the fact that you organize your way of sharing the doctrine of the Gospel differently from the way in which I organize it. We may formulate our words differently, we may have theological disagreements over the use of the words we are employing, and that is the thing I am pointing to, and that can very easily be a source of disagreement between people. You mean maybe one thing by the phrase faith from what I mean by the phrase faith, and so we don't quite understand each other, and we have to talk about the reality that is behind the words we are using.

COMMITTEE: Is theology then to be equated with formulation as opposed to essence or something like that?

PROF. I: Well, yes, but you can't really, you can't ever separate the two. I recognize that as well.

COMMITTEE: We were talking this morning, you know, about using words like atonement or satisfaction or redemption and justification. Is this the kind of thing you mean when you speak about theological diversity?

PROF. I: Right. It would be possible for a fellow, for example, to develop a whole system of theology on the basis of the major use of the theme reconciliation as contrasted with a fellow who would develop his basic theological system from the use of the term eternal life. And I think our concern as Christians, as confessional Christians, is to make sure that our theological verbalizing today is in conformity with the essence of the faith as it has been proclaimed in the past.

COMMITTEE: I just have one more question. I am not passing judgment, just for my own enlightenment. Is this the way in which we have traditionally, people usually used the term theological and theological disagreement that it is not so much in essence as maybe taking a key word on which to base something that in reality is the same as the other? Can that be called a theological disagreement?

PROF. I: I think so. See, our problem—that is, the problem of our Missouri Synod, that is the thing I try to say in the *Festschrift* article—is that we have too easily identified all of these words. We make them synonyms for one another, theology equals doctrine, equals confession, equals dogma, and equals Gospel, and my point is that we need to if we want to do that, O.K., if you want to make theology equivalent to the doctrine of the Gospel, I would be willing to accept that if that is the language that we are going to use. Then I am not going to talk about the legitimacy of theological disagreements. Then I want to find another word to make room for what I am talking about. The way I have found to do it is to say that we need to have confessional unity, we need to have—we need to make sure that we are maintaining our consensus in the doctrine of the Gospel as we have affirmed it through the acceptance of these confessional writings. That is our consensus. We are agreed that says what the doctrine of the Gospel is; that is our witness to the world; and within that confessional consensus we have to have room for theological diversity, that is, for variations of formulation and for different ways of saying it and even for differing emphases.

Prof. K Transcript

pp. 20-21

COMMITTEE: How about Paul and Romans 5 when he speaks of Adam, or in First Corinthians 11 when he speaks of woman falling first and then man?

PROF. K: He sees Adam as the representative of mankind who got us into this mess—

COMMITTEE: He refers to him as one man.

PROF. K: . . . he sees Christ as the Representative of mankind who got us out of this mess. That message is very clear to me in Romans 5. I would again have to say that if you want to get more of a message than that out of Romans 5, you know, assert on the basis of what Paul says that he is talking about a historical human being, that again I don't know; I think I know what his message about God and God's action in response to the event in Adam and the event in Christ is, and that is his message to me.

COMMITTEE: How about First Corinthians 11, where it says that man wasn't deceived, but the woman, and the woman fell first and then man? Does that tell us anything in terms of the fall itself, as an event as described in Genesis 3?

PROF. K: Unless Paul is discussing the subject of Adam and Eve's historicity, which I don't think he is, I don't really think it does tell us anything. I would have to respond again, I don't know.

COMMITTEE: X?

COMMITTEE: You said that Paul was telling us how one man got us into the mess and how another man got us out and that the important thing is to get this sense of God's activity through. But what sense does it make? And doesn't Paul's whole thing break down into nonsense if we can't be sure that there was one man involved in that? What sense is there—?

PROF. K: It doesn't for me, X, because boy! I see myself as a part of that Adam mess, my experience has, well, everything in my life that I laid out for you points in that direction, and it has a tremendous message for me completely apart from the question of the historical character of Adam, and I suppose that it does because I see myself as a son of

Adam as Paul laid out sons of Adam here . . . and I see myself as—

COMMITTEE: The difference, though, is that you didn't get us into this mess and I didn't, you know, we just continued.

COMMITTEE: Well now, the Confessions, Article II, Augsburg Confession, they say since the fall of Adam all men are full of such evil lust and inclinations from their mothers' wombs and so forth, statement on original sin, and they refer this to Adam and to Eve. There are a number of references, I don't have them all here; they do this quite consistently. You agree with the Confessions then that, in terms of this interpretation or?

PROF. K: Well, I don't think that the Confessions are discussing the historicity of Adam; they are talking about the fallenness of all men, and as I understand the Confessions, they talk about this in order to show one's need for Christ as Savior, and I use the Confessions in precisely that way, just as I use the Scriptures in that way and just as I talk about myself as experiencing this evil, this rebellion in myself that tells me I am in need of a Savior.

Prof. J Transcript

pp. 11-13

COMMITTEE: I would like to come back to my original question. Quite obviously, all these things are relevant to us as individuals, and the doctrine of original sin is quite obviously involved in a Law-Gospel connection. Now the Confessions teach that man was created in righteousness and true holiness—X, do you have one you would like to try out on him while I look up another one?

PROF. J: Do you have the passage in mind?

COMMITTEE: I can try it out.

PROF. J: That's a quotation from Ephesians 4:24, which talks about the new man who was created in righteousness and true holiness.

COMMITTEE: Well—

COMMITTEE: I have one from the Smalcald Articles here. I guess this is related to what you are talking about, where it says: "Here we must confess, as Paul says in Rom. 5:11, that *sin originated [and entered the world] from one man Adam, by whose disobedience all men were made sinners, [and] subject to death and the devil. This is called original or capital sin.*" That far the quotation. I think what we are asking is whether I am bound to accept on this basis the fact that there was one man, that there was a fall, and that original sin is that which we now inherit from him.

PROF. J: Well, since your purpose, as I understand it, is to find out what I believe, teach, and confess, I would stand committed precisely to that statement of the Smalcald Articles. This is what I believe, teach, and confess.

COMMITTEE: Let me give you another one. The Formula of Concord, Tappert 510, or, if you're not using Tappert, it is Article I, Original Sin, paragraph 9 to 10. "That this inherited damage is the reason why all of us, because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve, are in God's disfavor and are children of wrath by nature, as St. Paul says (Rom. 5:12). Furthermore, that original sin is a complete lack or absence of the original concreated righteousness of paradise or of the image of God according to which man was originally created in truth, holiness, and righteousness" [That is pretty close to what I was quoting] "together with a disability and ineptitude as far as the things of God are concerned. As the Latin words put it, 'The description of original sin denies to unrenewed human nature the gifts and the power, or the faculty and the concrete acts, to begin and to effect anything in spiritual matters.' Now the teaching here that man was originally created in true holiness and righteousness and then the idea that because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve are in God's disfavor and children of wrath by nature, and this is inherited damage. Am I at liberty as a Lutheran and we are interested not only, X, in what you believe personally, but in what you believe a Lutheran theologian may legitimately hold without passing judgment on anybody; we are interested in your position. Is there any part of that section that I can delete and still be faithful to my confessional subscription?

PROF. J: A word like "delete" I would not certainly want

to admit. I would, in looking at this particular passage and its context, see that what the whole point of this particular statement is is to affirm the impotence of the unborn human being to reconcile himself to God. I do not think that the Symbols are particularly interested in an explanation of how the individual is in this condition in which he finds himself at the present time. I think that the point of it is within the framework of the discussion that had gone on; the Solid Declaration as a part of the Formula of Concord is concerned primarily with actual controversies that had gone on, and it takes the *status controversiae* from that, that within the framework of the argumentation it stresses that the human being does not have any kind of intrinsic power, apart from the gift of the Holy Spirit, by which he can make himself acceptable to God. It seems to me that this is the, if you will, the *Lehrgehalt* ["doctrinal content"] of this particular passage.

COMMITTEE: You say you are not interested in giving an explanation. It seems to me this is exactly what they are doing. They are saying "because," "which is why all of us," "the reason why" — that is explanation, isn't it? The disobedience of Adam and Eve, isn't this an explanatory statement? This is the reason why, and then furthermore they mention that according to which man was originally created.

PROF. J: I think that what you have here in paragraph one [this is nine according to the marginal numbering] is a description, and the sentence, the subsidiary sentence begins: *Dass wir allesamt von wegen die Ungehorsams Adam and Evä*, and so forth. They are describing the situation as the human being is.

COMMITTEE: And they are saying why it is, are they not? How we came into this state? Are they not tracing it back?

PROF. J: They are saying that this is something which goes back, goes back to the very beginning of *Homo sapiens*, and with this I would find myself in complete agreement. [Change tape]

COMMITTEE: Did I understand you correctly to say that because of the — was that you were looking at it in the light of the controversy that if it isn't germane to their purpose that you might not be held —?

PROF. J: No. I think this explains why you have particular words and particular formulations that are used. And I do not think that in every case the use of a particular formulation, taken out of one side or the other of the controversy that they are trying to assuage, necessarily is the way in which this ought ideally or most appropriately to be said. In other words there is a considerable amount of theological construction in paragraph 10, the second of the questions [sections] that you read, for which you would really be hard put to find adequate Biblical documentation.

COMMITTEE: In paragraph 10?

PROF. J: Yes.

COMMITTEE: Would you give us —?

PROF. J: Yes. "The lack of the concreated, inherited righteousness in paradise," which interestingly enough is in quotation marks, is the kind of thing which represents a theological reflection upon the Biblical data. *Oder des Bildes Gottes*, where again you are dealing with a term which is Biblical but with a category, which as far as its content is concerned, is theological. I would be ready to defend the thesis that we do not have the category "image of God" in the Old Testament. You have an *εἰκών* doctrine in the New Testament, but I think in the Old Testament you have something else. And as a result then you are operating with a set of theological assumptions, theologically articulated assumptions, that do not necessarily represent the ideal or the best or the most perfect way of asserting something of this kind.

Prof. J Transcript

p. 15

COMMITTEE: I have a parallel thing that is on this same line, I think, when Melancthon, in talking about repentance in the Apology, talks about the promises of the Messiah, how the patriarchs comforted themselves. He makes pretty plain that this was that those people, not just as we look back we can see that this predicted the Messiah, but they recognized not only a gracious God but that they saw this in Christ, the Seed, a Person. Now would my subscription make me accept

predictive Messianic prophecy concerning this individual, the Christ, or because Melancthon's main purpose is to show that we are saved in the same way that they were saved, namely, faith in a gracious God, can I stop there with my confessional subscription and say the point is: We are all saved by faith in a gracious God, and I need not accept this that he proclaims, namely, that this was predictive Messianic prophecy which they recognized already at that time as centering in a Person, namely, the Christ, the Seed?

PROF. J: I think if you would look at the specific passage in which he cites this you would observe something that I spoke of in an article on "Toward a Hermeneutics of the Lutheran Symbolical Books," that there is in the Lutheran Symbols generally pretty straightforward exposition. You don't have much poetry. In other words, the range of literary genres is relatively limited. But that you do have in certain areas, explicitly in the Large Catechism and intercalated portions of other documents, something that strikes me as being pretty much in the area of persuasive homiletical kind of approach. And I would simply say that at this particular point Melancthon is reading something back for which he has no real basis other than his own imagination. Because if there is something that is singularly clear in the New Testament — in the Old Testament — it is that you don't have any evidence, at least (now maybe by a *mediata inspiratio* Melancthon had access to information that the rest of us don't have), but it is singularly clear that the protevangel does not get cited in the Old Testament as a part of the document. This is all I would want to talk concretely to that passage, to say that.

Prof. A Transcript

pp. 9-10

COMMITTEE: When you say predictive, do you mean Messianically predictive? I'm thinking now of chapter 7, where the virgin birth and so forth is; does this to you speak directly of the birth of Christ, or can we now, as we look back, say it's fulfilled in Christ and Matthew is simply applying something that was predicted to the point. That's one question; and the other would be more general, in terms of what the Confessions say repeatedly about Messianic prophecy. Would you agree with Article V of the Formula, where it says the patriarchs themselves encouraged and comforted themselves again by the preaching concerning the Seed of the woman, who has bruised the serpent's head?

PROF. A: Well, to the first one, which, if I remember correctly, basically was asking: Is this Messianically predictive in the sense that the prophet indicated the final, indicated Jesus Christ? and I would say I do not know whether Isaiah in the case of 7:14 was thinking about Jesus Christ. I myself tend to think not. I think that these words, however, are not, I would affirm — I would affirm that God, when He had His prophets give these oracles, that He may have seen future uses to which they would be put, future meanings that they would have that the prophets themselves were not aware.

COMMITTEE: So as we look back, we see there fulfillment — in a sense.

PROF. A: And properly so.

COMMITTEE: And what about the statement in the Confessions? There are more than this one.

PROF. A: Yes, yes. Right. I was reading one of the other ones just a while back, and it struck me, this is in the Apology IV, and it's page 114 in Tappert. Even though the Law (where is it now?) "the patriarchs knew that even though the Law does not teach the forgiveness of sins, the patriarchs knew the promise of the Christ, that for His sake God intended to forgive sins." Now, no passages on those here. Then it goes on and says: "The frequent references to mercy and faith in the Psalms and prophets belong here," and then it quotes a whole series of lovely passages that speak about judgment, about sin and grace, sin and grace; "If thou O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, who shall stand?" "There is forgiveness with thee." O.K., the point I would make here is this, is that I believe that God, as He works with me and with you and with all of us in judgment and promise, where He comes graciously to forgive our sins, that this is the basic way in which He acted with all of these men. And that this is correct when the Confessions affirm this. Now just how much the patriarchs knew of the details of how

God would ultimately work out your salvation and mine in Jesus Christ, the texts do not tell us much; they don't lead us to believe that they knew a great deal about it. There was a clear promise that God would be gracious; there was a clear promise that in the future He had something even better in store; Genesis 3:15 is never again quoted anywhere to my knowledge in the Scriptures. I think this is a—this is possible, that they comforted themselves with this promise. I personally don't see anything in the text to indicate this, but that God made known His gracious promise of forgiveness to them and they they said yes to however much they did reveal, He did reveal to them, this I would affirm. Like with Abraham; Abraham believed, and this was counted to him for righteousness. What was it he believed? God took him outside, showed him the stars, and said: "This is the way your offspring is going to be," and he said yes. Whatever it was that God revealed, they said yes to, and this was the essence of their faith. So, yes.

Prof. M Transcript

pp. 10-11

COMMITTEE: Well, maybe if you're through with this particular point, but in connection with the same article, we treat in creation and salvation and you touch on a little bit Genesis 3:15 only to the extent that—are you saying there that this was simply God's way of tempering His judgment and mercy by not pronouncing the verdict of death that He had pronounced when He said: "On the day that thou eatest thou shalt surely die"? Or do you take this definitely as a predictive Messianic prophecy?

PROF. M: O.K. Again, there are terms there that need explanation, but without going into that, I mean particularly the term Messianic, I can say yes to this as a Messianic promise, in the sense that it is a statement which speaks of deliverance to come. I will say that this is a passage which is interpreted in various ways by different interpreters and that my interpretation of that passage is one which does not see this in the sense of a specifically predictive Messianic

prophecy that at that point is speaking of, say, the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

COMMITTEE: Well, in line with that now, the Confessions say that the patriarchs comforted themselves with the promise of the blessed Seed, Genesis 3:15. How do you explain this?

PROF. M: I'm not aware offhand of a statement like that in the Confessions that tie that promise of the Seed so closely as you just did to Genesis 3:15. The point that I tried to make in the CTM article was the centrality of the Seed promise as it appears in Genesis 12, verses 1 to 3.

COMMITTEE: Well, I'm referring for example to Article V in the Formula, which says the patriarchs themselves "encouraged and comforted themselves again by the preaching concerning the *Seed of the Woman, who would bruise the Serpent's head.*" Or in Apology XII: "the blessed proclamation, the Gospel, which proclaims the forgiveness of sins through the blessed Seed, that is, Christ has from the beginning of the world been the greatest consolation and treasure to all pious kings, all prophets, all believers."

PROF. M: This is, as I said before, one of the interpretations, an exegetical interpretation of the Genesis 3:15 passage which represents, frankly represents the interpretation with which I grew up. It is an interpretation which at this moment I do not find as satisfying to the Scriptural evidence as the other interpretation—Scriptural evidence I'm speaking of now, because throughout the Old Testament the promise of the Seed, that is referred to, is the promise of the seed of Abraham in Genesis 12, which is that promise with which the New Testament begins when it says: Jesus Christ is born and He is the son of Abraham, the son of David—

COMMITTEE: You're saying then that you'd prefer not to accept this particular exegetical use of Genesis 3 which the Confessions use.

PROF. M: I'm saying that that is my personal preference and that I would regard that as one of those exegetical points on which there is an allowable degree of difference.

5j. The Findings Concerning The Seminary's Responsibility Toward the Synod's Doctrinal Stance

The majority of Seminary professors hold that they have no responsibility to teach in accord with a doctrinal statement adopted by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod unless they as individuals judge it to be in agreement with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. They affirm that they are bound to Scriptures and the Confessions but insist *de facto* that they reserve for each individual the right to be his own judge of whether his teaching is indeed Scriptural and confessional. They accept the principle that they may be called upon to demonstrate that their position is Scriptural. Thus the Synod is prohibited from speaking definitively on a controverted doctrine through its officially adopted resolutions and statements.

The Seminary's interpretation of the Synod's call to "honor and uphold" its doctrinal statements is to say that this means merely to study the aforementioned statements to determine "how well they do in fact apply to contemporary issues the truth of the Gospel drawn from the Scriptures." (Faculty Statement: "2. The Gospel, Our Confession, and Doctrinal Statements," adopted Nov. 24, 1970; see Appendix II.)

Any attempt by the Synod to go beyond this is regarded as un-Lutheran. Thus the action of the Synod in requiring subscription to Walther's theses prepared in 1881 as a statement on predestination is termed "un-Lutheran" by one faculty member.

The majority of the Seminary professors concede in theory that the church may in fact need to formulate and adopt new confessions, but it holds that such a confession could not be adopted unless it met the "voluntary and unreserved acceptance by *all* [*italics added*] those for whom it is to function

as a confession, that is, every clergyman and teacher, and each congregation in the synod." It is obvious that the odds are astronomically high against any confession designed to settle a controversy ever meeting the faculty's condition. In effect they are saying the church can never speak definitively on doctrine again. They are saying that the Lutheran Confessions of the 16th century are the last our church dare formulate and insist on, regardless of contemporary issues that divide the church. The Synod thus cannot insist that a given position is indeed Scriptural and must be taught.

A quick review of synodical doctrinal statements mentioned in the introduction of this report, compared with the positions of the faculty members described earlier in this report, illustrates that a substantial number of St. Louis faculty members are opposed to and are teaching contrary to the following synodical convention resolutions:

Cleveland, 1962 — Resolution 3-16 — Inerrancy of the Scriptures

Detroit, 1965 — Resolution 2-27 — Historicity of Jonah account

Detroit, 1965 — Resolution 2-29 — Adam and Eve and a historical fall into sin

New York, 1967 — Resolution 2-31 — Historicity of Adam and Eve, rejection of evolution

This is not an exhaustive list and is included only for purposes of illustration. The Synod will have to decide if it will approve this stance by the majority of the St. Louis Seminary faculty.

For documentation on this point see the following transcript and the faculty statement (Appendix II):

Documentation

Prof. I Transcript

pp. 29-31

COMMITTEE: O.K. Can I shift gears quickly? A couple of other things. Your book refers to quite a number of items, but one of them is rather interesting. In terms of the 1881 convention of the Missouri Synod the 13 theses on *Gnadenwahl*, and you indicate that the Synod expected compliance with these theses, and you mention that at a pastoral conference held thereafter those opposed to Walther said they could not approve the doctrine propounded by the convention and yet they wished to remain in the Synod in the hope the difficulties would be ironed out. Walther insisted they were no longer fellow workers and the President of Synod could not allow them to remain. The pastoral conference endorsed this statement. Would you say that the convention and the pastoral conference and Walther at that time, since there is a locus in the Confessions on predestination and they adopted things we believe, teach and confess, these 13 points, each time reiterating it and then insisting, if anyone wanted to remain in the Synod, he must accept it—would you say they acted in a un-Lutheran manner fundamentally?

PROF. I: I think everybody was acting in an un-Lutheran manner in the whole Lutheran Church at that time in connection with the *Gnadenwahlstreit*. They were not listening to one another, they were prejudging one another, they were giving caricatures of one another's positions not unlike certain situations today, and I think it is indeed tragic when people who are willing to affirm what the Formula of Concord says about the doctrine of election are not permitted to remain as part of the fellowship in the church because the Formula of Concord itself warns against precisely that kind of quarrel. It says, in connection with the doctrine of election: Friends, we are raising this issue not because it is an issue for us, it is an issue for others; for heaven's sake don't say anything more than this.

COMMITTEE: Mr. Chairman. (X: Yes, sir.) I find that very, very sad, a very sad chapter; I was personally involved in the family. The attack, however, came from one side, and then Missouri was defending itself. Now what should they have done with these attacks?

PROF. I: It all depends on who you read. You read Walther, that's right, the attack came from the other side. If you read Schmidt, he thinks he was the one who was attacked. That is exactly the problem: they were attacking each other instead of trying to deal with the facts of the issue.

COMMITTEE: Am I correct that you would feel that for them to pass these additional resolutions and to insist that they accept them if they wanted to remain in the Synod, that you would disagree with this?

PROF. I: That is contrary to the Lutheran confessional principle.

COMMITTEE: All right.

PROF. I: Let's not let that one rest just where it is. Let's take it right further because that is a major issue today. The issue is not what happened there in 1881 over 13 theses, X, you know that very well. The issue is over the role and function of synodically adopted doctrinal statements in the church today.

COMMITTEE: All right, and I wish we had time to go into that a bit more, but I don't think we are going to today.

PROF. I: Well, let me hand you a little document which you might want to peruse and reflect upon for yourselves, if you don't already have a copy through some other source, of the statement which came out of a meeting of the faculty, entitled "The Gospel, Our Confession, and Doctrinal Statements." The reflection of the opinion of the majority of the faculty of Concordia Seminary and a majority by then some. It affirms that the Synod's confessional position as spelled out in article two of the Synod's constitution doesn't have another doctrinal position but that one. It affirms the role which doctrinal statements play in the life of the church, and it attests to their importance and to our responsibility to honor and uphold them. It points out further that—what the reasons are for having a confessional position that is so boldly limited simply to article two.

Prof. C. Transcript

pp. 7-8

COMMITTEE: Now, in connection with these new issues, as we all know, there's been a difference of opinion as to how they might be elucidated or illuminated or resolved. And this brings into focus in the minds of some, the times when our Synod has spoken to a given issue. It might have spoken to the . . . issue, it might have spoken on creation, it might have spoken on various isagogical questions which may or may not be doctrinal, depending on the implications, but it does from time to time make doctrinal statements. Now I'm not referring to any special one in this particular question, but

what is your view of, for you as an ordained minister of the church, what do you think the value or the status of these doctrinal statements of Synod really properly should be regarded as?

PROF. C: I don't understand the process of making doctrinal statements by a particular Synod to which we belong as being on the same level as the confessional process, as was followed in the 16th century. I think there are many respects in which the process today is different. If we were to want to make new confessional statements — which of course I suppose is a possibility — then we'd have to go about it in a different way and with a much broader basis. But I do recognize certainly the right of the Missouri Synod — and in fact the necessity on occasion — to speak to doctrinal issues, and I would certainly honor the statements that had been made in this way. But I do feel that honoring them also involves taking a stance toward them, comparing them with the Scriptures and the generally accepted Confessions, and deciding for myself too whether they are a proper expression of the Christian faith.

COMMITTEE: All right, that's a qualification you put on honoring. But in a positive way, what would you say that honoring means to you?

PROF. C: Well —

COMMITTEE: Say, over against classroom activity or pulpit activity or whatever?

PROF. C: I think honoring would include at least positively accepting those who state such a position, while also when necessary analyzing it and deciding whether it is a necessary position to hold, or whether there are other possibilities. It means at least not ridiculing such a position that has been taken by — in a doctrinal statement. I don't think that it means the same thing though, as being fully bound to them in the sense that we are by the Confessions.

Prof. B Transcript

p. 21

COMMITTEE: O. K. This apparently means then that you are not in support of the insistence of the Synod at the New York convention, where it spoke quite firmly in terms of Adam and Eve being our first parents and so forth, and being specially created. I am sure you are acquainted with that resolution.

PROF. B: I don't think that this necessarily is in conflict with the convention resolution, because I clearly indicated the point must come where God intervenes in the process which He himself started and by a special implantation puts His image into these two people.

COMMITTEE: So you are saying that out of the mass of ape-like creatures running around God picked two and called them Adam and Eve and then it takes off from there?

PROF. B: This is right; He chose a segment of that earlier creation and made it into the human race, right.

COMMITTEE: Now in terms of the atheistic, I mean the evolutionistic philosophy of the law of tooth and fang and that man's concept developed in terms of what is right and what is wrong and his concept of conscience and even his concept of God, this all developed as man developed along up the pathway toward *Homo sapiens*, and after he was *Homo sapiens* these things came as part of this evolutionary process, his religion evolving, his morals evolving. Do you believe that that is an acceptable position, or do you think that when God picked these two apelike creatures or just crossed the threshold and said, "You are Adam, and you are Eve," that He endowed them then with what Paul calls righteousness and true holiness, or how do you deal with the problem?

PROF. B: I think with the implantation of the image of God man was given the potential to receive God's revelation, and at that point the training process began. God came to this man and said, "This is My will," and this man reacted to it according to the account that is developed from Genesis 2 on.

5k. The Findings Concerning Conversations with Seminary Students

The Fact Finding Committee found that the time involved in the determination of the faculty's doctrinal position did not allow sufficient time to explore views of the student body in detail. However, some conversations were held, and certain findings seem worthy of reporting. They are based on too small a sample to permit generalizations. But they may indicate the need of a more thorough examination of student views.

Some students expressed concern over the activities of the Fact Finding Committee. They appeared to be laboring under certain factual misapprehensions and in at least one instance were more concerned about a constriction of the field of theological education and investigation as a result of the inquiry than about concern for purity of doctrine.

Another student expressed concern not only over what professors teach but what they permit students to believe. He spoke of "reductionism" in theology. He also felt that there is in the seminary less emphasis on "the holy ministry" and more simply on ministry. The feeling is that ministry is nothing more than any other Christian vocation.

One committee member engaged a group of students in conversation over the historical-critical method. They were asked how they are preserved from denying the resurrection if it is permissible to deny many of the other historical narratives recorded in the Gospels. The answer was that they are kept from denying the resurrection by "faith." They were then asked how they keep this faith from being some free-floating thing that is "extra-Word." To this question they only smiled seemingly benignly and condescendingly as though it was a rather foolish question.

Students also reported that some professors "used the students as a foil" in preparing for the Fact Finding Committee interviews. They reported that

some professors moved theologically more "to the left" and seemed to be trying out their various theories on the students before facing the committee.

Another student told a committee member he feels like he is on a table with the legs being cut off. He feels as if he is floating and his whole faith is being tested by what he hears in the classroom.

Another student felt he "should have gone to Springfield." He indicated that the St. Louis Seminary was liberal in its view of Scripture. He believed that perhaps the St. Louis Seminary was naive as to where their liberal view of Scripture would take them.

Still another student expressed serious concerns about "denial of Lutheran teaching" in the classroom. He reported that there are students on campus who do not believe it necessary to believe in the resurrection. These same students however asserted that if questioned they would come up with the right answers.

NOTE: The committee neither solicited nor received information from students concerning specific faculty members or fellow students. Note also the January 11, 1971, letter signed by several hundred students and submitted to Pres. Tietjen and Pres. Preus. The students say:

"We the undersigned students of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, are concerned and disturbed about some aspects of the present state of affairs at our Seminary and within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. We sense an atmosphere of lack of trust, personal and organizational 'in-fighting,' and a general breakdown of communication between persons of different points of view—all in the name of service to our Lord Jesus Christ.

"We lament the existing and impending divisions within our Church. We affirm the freedom and life which the Gospel of Jesus Christ gives to *all* Christians—'liberals' and 'conservatives' alike. As students at Concordia Seminary, we acknowledge that differences of opinion and interpretation exist among us. Yet we affirm the unity which we Christians share within the body of Christ. We plead for an end to innuendo, political maneuvering, and fear of one another. We pray for a beginning of reconciliation."

The synodical President is also including in his report to the Synod a January 21, 1971, letter sent to his office directly and signed by 30 students of the St. Louis Seminary. While not included in the report of the Fact Finding Committee, the observations of the students regarding the teaching at the Seminary coincide so remarkably with the findings of the Fact Finding Committee that they merit attention in this regard. It should be noted that the students do not name individual professors.

Documentation

Concordia Seminary Student Letter

January 21, 1971

Dear Dr. Preus,

We, the undersigned seminarians, have felt compelled by conscience to speak out on certain issues presently occurring in the life of our church and our Seminary. It is with a heavy heart and after much prayer that we do this, but we feel that the situation has reached such a peak that we can no longer remain silent. This letter springs out of a great concern and love for the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, a deep concern for the confessional heritage of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and a hope for a return to the solid Scriptural and confessional tradition for which our Seminary has properly earned its excellent reputation.

Our concerns center about the investigation of the Seminary which is being conducted through your office. We are well aware of various publications which have given the impression that this investigation is deplorable (Bertwin Frey's "Declaration of Determination"), that it is the product of a "fundamentalistic" president seeking to impose his will on a "moderate" faculty (*Newsweek*, Jan. 4, 1971; *Christian Herald*, Jan., 1971), that you have imposed an intolerable condition on the faculty (Resolution of the Faculty, Jan. 5, 1971), and that it is unnecessary because "neither the faculty

nor I know of any basic theological differences within the faculty involving interpretation of Scripture or the meaning of confessional subscription" (President Tietjen as reported in the *Lutheran Witness Reporter*, Nov. 15, 1970, p. 2). In addition, the Seminary is seeking to quiet alleged charges throughout the church by having students under the auspices of the Seminary Relations Department respond to issues that are raised (in what manner is a foregone conclusion) by talking to pastors, and by trying to find grass-roots support for the Seminary (minutes from IV Year class meeting, Nov. 18, 1970). Furthermore, you have repeatedly been slandered in publications, in classrooms at the seminary, and in conversations between students in an apparent effort to impugn your motives and smear, impede, and ultimately undermine the investigation.

We feel that the situation has reached the point where this investigation is direly needed. We feel any student who has been on this campus for only a few weeks is well aware of the fact that there are "basic theological differences among members of the faculty," and that any attempt to deny this is either sheer naivete or outright falsehood. Many of us have confronted professors personally with these differences, and we know that certain of their colleagues have done the same. Characteristic of these theological differences as we have heard them taught by our professors are the following:

(1) Scripture is inerrant only in its soteriological and Christological purposes. (2) The theory that John the Baptist did not wear camel's hair, eat honey, and preach repentance in the Judean desert is a viable option. Instead (so the story goes) the desert was merely a "theological" desert, and the clothing merely "theological" clothing. John, in fact, preached in Jerusalem, but a second Elijah was expected and therefore the church "put 'Elijah-trappings' on the Baptist." (3) The existence of angels and demons is doubtful. (4) Many of the miracles in Acts did not really occur. (5) the JEDP theory (or some derivative thereof) is almost exclusively taught without even presenting Mosaic authorship as a viable option. (6) The Scriptures are inspired only in the same sense as our sermons are inspired. (7) The writer(s) of Genesis 1—11 felt that the material he was presenting was historically true, but we are not bound by the facticity of these events. (8) We should admit non-Lutherans to our altars.

We especially protest the widespread and often uncritical use of the historical-critical method. Such use is, if not misleading, at least dangerous, for it has as its basis non-Christian presuppositions. In the words of George Ladd (*Interpretation*, vol. 25, p. 51), "... the historical-critical method places severe limitations upon its methodology before it engages in the quest for Jesus. It has decided in advance the kind of Jesus it must find—or at least the kind of Jesus it may not find, the Jesus portrayed in the Gospels." And even such a liberal scholar as Carl Braaten says in *The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ*, p. 22, "The historian often begins by claiming that he conducts his research objectively, without presuppositions, and ends by surreptitiously introducing a set of presuppositions whose roots are deeply embedded in an anti-Christian Weltanschauung." To be sure, at times the "other side" is presented—but only at times, and then only weakly. Often classical treatments are neglected. (A recent course in Galatians did not even list Luther's Commentary in the bibliography.) The classroom too often has become a forum for what different men are saying about the text rather than a laboratory to listen to what the text, in fact, is saying.

Taken by themselves some of the above issues may not appear to be too important. When one uses the same methodological approach which results in many of the above positions, however, one can justifiably end up as does Rudolf Bultmann when he denies the facticity of the resurrection. Why, for example, if we are not bound to the facticity of the events in Gen. 1—11, must we be bound to the facticity of the resurrection? There is no compelling reason except that certain things belong to the proclamation of the Gospel and that these events are a portion of that Gospel. However, with such a view, the content of the Gospel is, in the final analysis, really arbitrarily determined by an imposition of man's will. The miracles in Acts may not be central to our faith, but the resurrection is. Adam and Eve may not be basic, but the virgin birth is. Why??? Only because we have now arbitrarily decided that this is so. Scripture nowhere gives any warrant for saying that some things should be held as true while others need not. To us such methods of scholarship represent a total departure from acceptable Scriptural and Lutheran methods of interpretation, and they can in no way be reconciled. Some persons will say that such "peripheral" matters do not hinder or impede the

Gospel. However, as we have shown, this is an untenable position, because of the dangers to the central Gospel events which occur as a result of using this methodology.

Part of the dispute in the current crisis is over what is actually the problem. It has been assumed by many that what is crucial is the character of the personal beliefs of professors. To be sure, such beliefs are important. But what may be equally important is not what a professor believes, but what he allows. If I as a person believe in the virgin birth, but as a professor allow denial of such a virgin birth as a viable option, great harm is done to the Synod. Pastors may be turned out who cannot with a good conscience confess with the Apostles' Creed, "... who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary. . . ." What this means, of course, is that unconfessional teachings may go unchecked. And it goes without saying that if men with such teachings are ordained, the concept of confessional subscription which has been taught for years in our church is rendered meaningless and might well be discarded.

This, in fact, is happening already. Our concerns lie not only with our professors' teaching and beliefs, but ultimately with the students who are being graduated and subsequently go into the parish. Students may be heard espousing the same opinions as those stated above in addition to some of the following, which serve as examples of what a number of our classmates are saying: (1) We are free to commune any Christians at our altars. (2) Violent revolution may be a way of bringing God's kingdom in. (3) The essential Gospel message is communicated by feeding the poor and doing other civil righteousness, without the Word being spoken. (4) I would subscribe to the Confessions, even though I disagreed with some of the doctrinal sections, if it served to preach the Gospel. (This is said with full knowledge of what confessional subscription has always meant in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.) (5) Evolution is compatible with Scripture. (6) Ordination of women is Biblically permissible. (7) Saving knowledge of God can be communicated to man outside of Biblical revelation. (8) Angels may not exist. (9) Homosexuality is not always a sin. (10) There is a possibility that some of the miracles didn't happen. (11) Non-Christians are our brothers in the same way as fellow Christians are. These are only examples of some of the thoughts expressed by students in a positive manner. Many other examples could be cited. Again, we might add that while students may not accept things personally, they are willing to allow a great deal of other teachings also.

These are some of the concerns which we as students have. We realize the gravity of these statements, but feel that the time to remain silent is past. We have heard countless times from fellow students, "I disagree with what Professor X is saying, but it's useless (or a waste of time) to try to argue with him about it, because I don't have his educational background." Professors have been challenged in class and out by students and other professors, but all to no avail. Thus we give our support to you in this endeavor; we pray that the Holy Spirit will give guidance to the committee, that He may lead all men in our church to a truly Scriptural and confessional position, and that the church in the end will be strengthened. May God grant to us wisdom, understanding, and love for His Word as together we proclaim His holy Gospel, which alone can lead us to salvation.

Yours in Christ,

6. THE REPORT OF THE BOARD OF CONTROL OF CONCORDIA SEMINARY, ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

6a. The Report of the Board of Control

June 22, 1972

The Reverend Dr. J. A. O. Preus, President
The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod
210 North Broadway
St. Louis, Missouri 63102

Dear President Preus:

At its meeting June 16-17, 1972, the Board of Control of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, adopted a "Progress Report of the Board of Control of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, to the President of the Synod and to the Board for Higher Education in Response to the Directive of the Synod in Milwaukee Convention Resolution 2-28." I am herewith transmitting the board's report to you. Appended to and made a part of the report are corrected interview transcripts and a copy of each faculty member's response to the Fact Finding Committee's summary of his interview.

Cordially,

John H. Tietjen
President

Progress Report of the Board of Control
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri,
to the President of the Synod
and to the Board for Higher Education
in Response to the Directive of the Synod
in Milwaukee Convention Resolution 2-28

In Resolution 2-28 the 1971 Milwaukee Convention of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod took the following action:

Whereas, The President of the Synod has submitted the report of the fact-finding committee to the Board of Control of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.; and

Whereas, The Synod is desirous that a conclusion be brought about by the Holy Spirit under the Word of God; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod direct the Board of Control to take appropriate action on the basis of the report, commending or correcting where necessary; and be it further

Resolved, That the Board of Control report progress directly to the President of the Synod and the Board for Higher Education; and be it finally

Resolved, That the President of the Synod report to the Synod on the progress of the Board of Control within one year. (*Proceedings*, p.122)

The resolution of the Milwaukee Convention directs the Board of Control "to take appropriate action on the basis of the report" of a Fact Finding Committee established by President J. A. O. Preus in September, 1970, to investigate the doctrinal position of the members of the St. Louis Seminary faculty. The resolution instructs the Board of Control to make a progress report to the President of the Synod and to the Board for Higher Education and directs the President of the Synod to report to the Synod on the progress of the Board of Control within one year.

To carry out the directive of the Milwaukee Convention and to enable the President of the Synod to report on the board's progress in its review of the report of the Fact Finding Committee, the Board of Control submits the following progress report to the President of the Synod and the Board for Higher Education.

I. Action of the Board of Control

Although a portion of the Fact Finding Committee report was sent to individual board members in July of 1971, President J. A. O. Preus officially presented the Fact Finding Committee report to the Board of Control at a meeting of the board on September 20, 1971. The report was in three sections: 1) transcripts of interviews with 45 members of the faculty, 2) summaries of the individual interviews, and 3) a "Summary of Report" containing the Fact Finding Committee's analysis and evaluation along with supplementary materials. President Preus presented the report to the board without instruction. Dr. Paul Zimmerman, chairman of the Fact Finding Committee, was present with President Preus for the presentation.

At its September, 1971, meeting the Board of Control resolved to ask each member of the faculty to check his transcript against the tape recording of his interview and to correct the transcript on the basis of the tape recording. Such a procedure was necessary because the board received interview transcripts which had not been reviewed for accuracy and contained a number of mistakes and omissions, some of which changed the meaning of that portion of the interview. Corrected interview transcripts were delivered to the board and were read and studied by the members of the board individually during the latter months of 1971. A copy of each corrected transcript is appended to and made a part of this report.

At its October, 1971, meeting the Board of Control resolved to provide each member of the faculty with the Fact Finding Committee's summary of his interview and to invite each faculty member to respond to the summary. The faculty members' responses to the summaries were received and reviewed by the members of the board individually during the latter months of 1971. In their responses some faculty members said that the summaries accurately reflect their position, other faculty members said that they do not. A copy of each faculty member's response to the summary of his interview is appended to and made a part of this report.

Four members of the faculty were on leave during the 1970-71 academic year and therefore were not interviewed by the Fact Finding Committee along with the rest of the faculty. Interviews with the four faculty members were not held until November, 1971. The transcripts and summaries of these interviews were received in January and February of 1972. These transcripts were also corrected by the individual faculty members, and each faculty member shared his reaction to the summary of his interview. The corrected transcripts and faculty responses are included among the transcripts and responses appended to and made a part of this report.

The Board of Control conducted an extensive interview for nearly three hours with President John H. Tietjen at the regular meeting of the board on October 18, 1971. The board discussed in detail with President Tietjen his personal theological position and doctrinal commitment. President Tietjen also responded to questions about the position of the faculty concerning confessional subscription.

Since the Board of Control had to make a decision before December 31, 1971, on whether or not to renew the contracts of seven faculty members, the board decided at its October, 1971, meeting to give priority attention to the Fact Finding material relating to these professors. In place of interviews the board established a procedure at its November, 1971, meeting by which board members who had questions or concerns about the doctrinal position of any of the seven professors might submit questions in writing and receive a written response from the professor. Three board members submitted questions to one or more of five faculty members, namely Professors David Deppe, Arlis Ehlen, Wi Jo Kang, Ralph Klein, and Robert Smith. The Board of Control received the answers to the questions at the board's meeting on December 13, 1971.

President Preus was present for the December 13, 1971, meeting of the Board of Control and requested that the board interview three of the seven professors whose contracts were expiring so that he might question them about his concerns. The board agreed, and forty-minute interviews each were held with Professors

Ehlen, Klein, and Smith. By board agreement board members asked questions only after President Preus finished with his questions. The board decided that the interviews were for the purpose of making a decision on contract renewal and not on the Fact Finding Committee's report concerning the professors to be interviewed and would not prejudice or limit future board action growing out of its further review of the Fact Finding Committee report.

At the December 13, 1971, meeting the Board of Control resolved to reappoint six of the seven professors who had been recommended for reappointment and to meet again with the seventh professor, Dr. Arlis Ehlen, on December 20, 1971. On that date the board interviewed Dr. Ehlen for almost three hours. President Preus was present and participated in the interview. The board's decision made at that meeting was not to reappoint Dr. Ehlen. Neither at that meeting nor at subsequent meetings did the board state a reason for its action. At its February meeting the board stated that in the action declining to renew Dr. Ehlen's contract individual board members had voted as they did for varying individual reasons. Since Dr. Ehlen was permitted to finish out his present contract, the board's action did not imply, as some in the Synod have assumed, that he was guilty of false doctrine. In Dr. Ehlen's case, as in the case of those professors whose contracts were renewed, the board's action was without prejudice to the board's continuing review of the Fact Finding Committee report.

The Board of Control held a four-day meeting over a holiday weekend, February 18-21, in order to carry out its responsibilities in connection with its review of the Fact Finding Committee report and to deal with a number of other pressing matters that required its attention. During the February meeting the board decided on a basic direction in dealing with the Fact Finding Committee report. It resolved that on the basis of the report it would isolate problem issues, or areas of doctrinal and theological concern, meet with members of the faculty to discuss the issues, and then take appropriate action.

The Board of Control isolated a number of issues and discussed these with members of the faculty. Recognizing that a key issue is the use of historical-critical methodology, the board asked for a presentation in which the board would be able to learn how historical criticism is used at the seminary and what its strengths and weaknesses are. On February 20, 1972, Professor Edgar M. Krentz, assisted by Professors Alfred von Rohr Sauer, Norman C. Habel, and Herbert T. Mayer, led the board in a four-hour presentation and discussion of historical-critical methodology. In his presentation Dr. Krentz reviewed the history of Biblical interpretation, demonstrated historical-critical methods in an inductive study of the Passion narratives in the four Gospels, and described the strengths and weaknesses of such a methodological approach.

Another key issue to which the Board of Control directed its attention was the nature of confessional subscription. The board asked the four department chairmen to arrange for a presentation on the issue. Professor Robert Bertram, chairman of the Department of Systematic Theology, made the presentation at the meeting of the board on March 20, 1972, assisted by Professors Alfred von Rohr Sauer, John W. Constable, and Andrew M. Weyermann.

The Board of Control decided that another key issue requiring its attention is the relation between Fact and Faith in biblical interpretation. Professor Norman C. Habel made a presentation on the subject at the meeting of the board on April 17, 1972. Present to assist in the discussion were Professors Herbert J. Bouman, Richard R. Caemmerer, Sr., and Arlis J. Ehlen.

At its February meeting the Board of Control had resolved to extend a one-year renewal of contract to Dr. Arlis J. Ehlen so that he might participate in the discussion of issues on which the board had resolved to embark and so that the board might include him in projected action of "commending or correcting." The board asked Professor Ehlen to make a presentation at its meeting on April 17, 1972, on how he teaches the Biblical materials dealing with the Exodus. Professor Ehlen's presentation, entitled "The Miracle at the Sea," dealt with the various ways in which God's miracle of delivering His people from the Egyptians is described in the Scriptures and analyzed the text of Exodus 14.

To give further consideration to the issue of the use of historical-critical methodology, the Board of Control arranged for pro and con presentations on the subject at its meeting on May 15, 1972. Professor Edgar Krentz spoke in favor, Professor Robert Preus against, the proposition, "A Lutheran theologian may legitimately use historical-critical methodology in interpreting the Scriptures."

While the Board of Control was engaged in its study of the report of the Fact Finding Committee, President Preus issued the document, "A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles." President Preus explained that the purpose of

the document was not to serve "as a new standard of orthodoxy, but rather to assist the board of control in identifying areas which need further attention in terms of the Synod's doctrinal position." At its meeting on March 20, 1972, the board received President Preus' "Statement" as guidelines to his assessment of the issues confronting the Synod and to his understanding of how the issues should be resolved.

At President Preus' suggestion the Board of Control invited the seminary faculty to respond to "A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles." The faculty accepted the board's invitation and adopted a response on April 4, 1972. In its response the faculty asserted that it does not consider the positions rejected in President Preus' "A Statement" to be descriptive of its teaching and that it finds "A Statement" to be invalid both as an assessment and as a solution of problems at the seminary.

On May 17, 1972, President Preus, accompanied by the synodical vice-presidents and the president of the Missouri District, met with the seminary faculty. In presentations to each other President Preus and the faculty made requests of each other. That exchange is in process and the board is awaiting the outcome of their discussions as of this writing.

II. Circumstances Affecting the Progress of the Board

The Board of Control as a whole and its individual members in particular have expended a great deal of time and energy and have given much prayer and study to the review of President Preus' Fact Finding Committee Report. The major portion of each meeting was devoted to issues related to the report. The regular monthly meetings were longer than had been the board's practice in the past. In addition, two meetings of the board were for two days, another meeting was for four days, to deal with the volume of agenda material required in careful attention to the work of review. Individual board members spent a great deal of time between meetings reviewing the large amount of materials in the Fact Finding Committee report and related items for study. In spite of the board's best efforts a final report stating a definitive conclusion is not possible at this time since only a limited number of interviews could be held with individual professors.

A number of extenuating circumstances affected the progress of the board in carrying out the mandate of Milwaukee Convention Resolution 2-28.

Two new members were elected to the Board at the Milwaukee Convention, and the board was reorganized in September, 1971, with a new vice-chairman and secretary. Some time had to be spent in orientation and review of the board's work.

Many important items necessary for the normal functioning of the seminary required due consideration. Among these were the annual report of the seminary administration, the budget for the next fiscal year, the fee structure, the report of the auditors, a proposal for married student housing, faculty calls, administrative appointments, curriculum matters, the report of the Theological Education Research Committee, important correspondence, and the normal monthly department reports and business items.

Extraordinary items were on the agenda during the months that the Fact Finding Committee report has been under consideration. First mediation efforts and then arbitration procedures required the attention of the board under the provision of Bylaw 6.75 of the *Handbook*. The board has had to devote time to arbitration hearings and to the study of a great deal of material submitted during the hearings. Another extraordinary item was the consideration of the reappointment of seven faculty members at a time when the doctrinal position of all faculty members was under review. Still another extraordinary item was an investigation of the seminary by representatives of the American Association of Theological Schools. In addition, the board had a number of unusual dealings with the City of Clayton over city use of seminary property.

The board had to give serious consideration to many procedural questions during the past year. The board found it necessary to devote time to determining just how to fulfill the responsibilities assigned to it by the Milwaukee Convention. The board's attention was devoted to procedures in releasing the Fact Finding Committee Report or portions of it to faculty members, questions of tape recording all or parts of interviews and board meetings, and the relation of contract renewals and arbitration hearings to the work of reviewing the Fact Finding Committee report.

Among the extenuating circumstances were the numerous requests made by President Preus either in writing or in person at board meetings. President Preus

at the invitation of the board was able to be present at six of the eleven meetings of the board held between September, 1971, and June, 1972. Accompanying him were a number of resource persons, ranging from one to four, for varying and often lengthy agenda items. Almost the entire time of the January 1972 meeting was devoted to concerns of President Preus. The board did its best to give careful consideration to the desires and requests of President Preus, thus limiting the time which the board was able to devote to its responsibilities under Resolution 2-28 of the Milwaukee Convention.

III. Evaluation and Future Plans

Though the Board of Control would like to be able to report more progress, good progress has been made in the board's review of President Preus' Fact Finding Committee Report. The board has been getting more and more clarity on what the basic issues are, especially through the discussions it has been holding with faculty members. In the course of these discussions the board has been carrying out the instructions of Milwaukee Convention Resolution 2-28 and has been determining how specifically to do the work of taking the appropriate action, commending or correcting as necessary.

Thus far the board has focused its attention on three major issues: the use of historical-critical methodology, the nature of confessional subscription, and the relation between fact and faith in interpreting the Scriptures. The board intends to continue to focus on those issues. In addition, plans for future discussions with faculty members include the following:

- Relation between Scriptures, Confessions and Other Writings
- Nature of the Holy Scriptures
- Relation between Scripture and Gospel
- Nature of Scripture's Authority
- Nature of Scripture's Uniqueness
- Relation between Presuppositions, Methods and Conclusions in Interpretation
- Relation between Sources and the Text of Scripture
- Relationship between the Old and the New Testaments
- Prophecy and Fulfillment
- Miracles in the Scriptures
- Nature of the Gospel
- Law and Gospel
- Gospel, Doctrine, and Theology

A basic issue lies at the root of the issues listed above and comes to the surface again and again no matter what the topic for discussion may be. From one perspective the issue is not doctrine but method. How does a Lutheran theologian carry out the task of interpreting the Scriptures? What methods may he or may he not legitimately use in the process? With what presuppositions must he do his interpretive work? Looked at from another perspective the issue is very much doctrinal. It is the question of the proper relation between the Scriptures and the Gospel in the task of Scripture interpretation. Since the Scriptures are the only rule and norm for our faith, what is the relation between exegetical conclusions and the exposition of the doctrine of the Gospel to which we have pledged ourselves in the Lutheran Confessions? How should our understanding of the Gospel affect the results of our interpretation of a passage of the Scriptures?

These basic issues are not just under consideration at Concordia Seminary. They are issues that are under discussion throughout the Synod and beyond it. People throughout the Synod consider themselves very much involved in any effort to deal with the issues at Concordia Seminary. Supporting evidence is the large volume of mail over the board's decision concerning the reappointment of Dr. Ehlen and over the letter and guidelines of President Preus to the members of the Synod. As the board attempts to deal with the issues at Concordia Seminary, it must take into account the broader context within which the issues must be dealt with throughout the Synod.

The basic issues are not easy questions which can be resolved by simple yes or no answers. Nor are they the kind of problems that can be resolved by the imposition of discipline. They can be resolved only through patient and careful study, through frank and fraternal discussion, and through mutual trust in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who leads us into all truth. The Board of Control has been engaged in such study and discussion with members of the faculty this past year and intends to continue the process. Through such a process the board will ultimately be able to carry out the Synod's directive that it "take appropriate action on the basis of the report, commending or correcting where necessary."

In its careful review of the Fact Finding Committee report and in the interviews and discussions held with faculty members the board to this date has found no false doctrine among the members of the seminary faculty. Though unsubstantiated accusations against the faculty as a whole and individual members continue to be made, the board has not been required to deal with any formal charge of false doctrine. Rather, all the members of the faculty affirm a commitment to the doctrinal position of the Synod and hold that they are faithful to that commitment.

The board still has serious questions which must be asked. From the board's study of the Fact Finding Committee Report and from its discussions with faculty members the board is aware of many problems involved in dealing with the issues listed above. The board intends to pursue the problems as it deals with the issues in discussions with faculty members in order to assure that the faculty proves faithful to its commitment to the doctrinal position of the Synod. The board is asking the faculty to engage itself in a discussion of the issues so that the members of the faculty can learn from one another and so that those who need help and guidance may receive it from their more mature and experienced colleagues. The board is also cautioning the members of the faculty to communicate clearly when they speak in public and to avoid subjects and language that can cause confusion in the church and are better reserved for exploration with other theologians. The board will keep the president of the Synod informed of its review of the issues and of any resolution or action that it may propose.

In conclusion, the Board of Control makes a number of observations about attitudes that are essential for a God-pleasing resolution of our problems. Since we are brothers in the faith seeking to serve our one Lord, we must try to deal with one another fraternally. We must receive each other as God's gifts to His Church for the edifying of His body in love. We must be patient with each other and do our best to understand each other as we seek to assure faithfulness to the Truth of God's Word. We must trust each other and seek to learn from each other as together we study God's Word. We must remember the motto of the Milwaukee Convention as we carry out its Resolution 2-28 and therefore be "sent to reconcile" as we do the work of "commending or correcting." We must do all our work under the sign of the cross, avoiding a perfectionism in doctrinal formulation that leaves no room for the forgiveness of sins and at the same time assuring such a faithfulness to the Word of God that the Gospel of the Cross of Christ is confessed with clarity and power. We covet the prayers and the patient understanding of the Synod as we continue to carry out our responsibilities.

6b. Minority Report of the Board of Control of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri

Minority Concerns

Two other documents need to be attached to the report of the Board of Control of June 16 and 17.

Two members of the Board of Control, namely Doctor E. C. Weber, Third Vice-President of the Synod, and Mr. Walter Dissen, Secretary of the Board of Control, felt constrained by reasons of conscience to submit a minority report. A debate about parliamentary procedure followed this announcement of this report, and the Board has passed a resolution to the effect that it has no right to permit the issuance of a minority report because such a report should be presented only to a Synod convention. However, since the Synod in convention asked the Board of Control to report to the President of the Synod and to the Board for Higher Education it would appear that a statement of a minority could also be addressed to the President of the Synod and to the Board for Higher Education.

The minority statement is not addressed to the Synod, but has been directed to the President.

Matters of conscience need to be respected, and the President of the Synod also feels conscience bound that the information contained in this minority statement be shared with the Synod at this time. He is therefore submitting the material presented by Doctor Weber and Mr. Dissen in the interest of giving the church the fullest possible information on this matter, so that the proper evalua-

tion of the entire matter can be made. At this point, the President of the Synod is not attempting to judge in this matter but, in the interest of conscience, and of placing the information before the church, this statement by these two board members is herewith appended.

Also, another member of the Board, Mr. Charles Burmeister, on July 27 addressed a letter to the Board of Control which constitutes still a third position relative to the procedural bind in which the Board of Control finds itself. This letter is likewise appended as part of the record. The recommendation contained in the letter of Mr. Burmeister has a great deal of merit to it.

It will be impossible for a reader of this document to have the entire picture without having the material presented by these three board members. Therefore it is herewith brought to your attention.

Minority Report

The undersigned, a minority of the Board of Control, not agreeing with the Board's Progress Report to the President of the Synod and the Board for Higher Education in response to Milwaukee Convention Resolution 2-28, desire to express their report on the Board's progress with respect to the report of the Fact Finding Committee (hereinafter sometimes referred to as the FFC).

I. Action of the Board of Control

The Board Report states some of the transcripts contained "... a number of mistakes and omissions, some of which changed the meaning of that portion of the interview." The report of the Board makes no citations, however, in this respect. We found no mistakes or omissions of a substantive nature or that did not themselves point to further inquiry. It is understandable that a transcriber might have some problems transcribing from a tape some theological terms or Greek or Hebrew words (interviewees were requested to use English terms). Interestingly, our analysis indicates a ratio of commendations on the transcripts to criticisms of approximately three to one. A comment on one transcript indicated that under the circumstances it was outstanding. One should not therefore conclude from a reading of the Board's Report that it has been dealing with unreliable material.

The Progress Report implies that because four transcripts and summaries were not received until January and February 1972, this delayed the work of the Board, however, the Board had in its possession approximately forty-five transcripts by September 20, 1971 (many of which were received earlier than that) and astonishingly in the intervening nine months managed to interview only one person on the basis of the FFC report—namely, President Tietjen. The clear weight of the evidence overwhelmingly indicates that a delay in receiving four transcripts did not impede the progress of the Board in dealing with the FFC report.

While the Board explains it interviewed Dr. Tietjen at length on the basis of the FFC report on him, the Board did not come to a conclusion as some members were dissatisfied with his position on such matters as inspiration, inerrancy, the role of our confessions today and the permissibility of teaching theistic evolution as a viable alternative to the Scriptural account of creation. It needs to be noted that taping of all interviews was suggested by letter of one Board member and was formally considered by the Board on two occasions with the result that each time the Board rejected a proposal which would have provided a record. (We also note that the Synodical President suggested the Board tape record interviews by the Board.) The taping of interviews was vigorously opposed by President Tietjen. The foregoing interview with President Tietjen was the **ONLY INSTANCE** where the Board corporately considered the FFC transcript and summary and a response thereto. One or more of the undersigned on at least one occasion reminded the Board of the necessity—indeed, the urgency—of expeditiously proceeding with interviews on the basis of the FFC report.

Consideration was given by the Board to contract renewals of seven professors. The Board allotted forty minutes each for the interviews with Professors Ehlen, Klein and Smith, however, this time limitation prevented several Board members from asking all the questions they had and limited the scope of questions and answers. Indeed, the very minutes of a subsequent Board meeting reflect the opinion of the Synodical President that Professors Klein and Smith should have been interviewed further.

The Board details its December 1971 and February 1972 action regarding contracts of professors. The undersigned believe the Board's discussion set forth in the pertinent paragraph should not be construed to mean or indicate there was satisfaction with the doctrinal position of Professor Ehlen as President Tietjen has stated he had given brotherly counsel to Professor Ehlen and Professor Ehlen himself at one meeting indicated he had received counsel from his brethren relative to subject matter of the Board's interview with him. While reasons were not given for the Board's action in the first instance in not renewing Professor Ehlen's contract, certain Board members indicated their willingness to do so even though under Synod's Bylaw 6.53 (c), "The Board of Control may decline to renew the appointment of a faculty member without tenure at its discretion *and without formal statement of cause.*" (Emphasis supplied.) (The undisputed evidence is that it is commonplace at Synodical institutions of learning for the appropriate Board of Control to decline reappointment of untenured professors without giving the reason therefor.)

True, the Board did hold a four-day meeting in February 1972 but with respect to the FFC report, only procedural matters were covered and not a SINGLE interview was held during the entire four-day session. No substantive matters in the FFC report were acted upon!

Some issues have been isolated by the Board and a number of presentations have been made on such issues. With the exception of the "debate" on the historical-critical method the faculty participants have been exponents of ONE viewpoint. No text of the presentations has been distributed nor were any of the presentations taped. Although strengths and weaknesses of the historical-critical method are casually referred to in the Board's report, they are not set forth. Thus only in the "debate" on the historical-critical method was a categorical statement made by one professor that the historical-critical method is NOT compatible with our Lutheran doctrine that Scripture is the Word of God and as such is authoritative. There it was denied that the historical-critical method can be used with Lutheran presuppositions and it was asserted that the historical-critical method is the great error of our day in biblical exegesis and Christian theology. We further note that substantial portions of some presentations did not deal with current theological issues and to that extent consumed valuable time of the Board. For example, the first presentation on the historical-critical method dealt in large part with the way the Passion is reported in the four Gospels, and a substantial portion of the presentation on the Nature of Confessional Commitment dealt with abrogation of the ceremonial law and the question of the papacy and the Antichrist.

Although the Board in February 1972 resolved to extend a one-year contract to Professor Ehlen, President Tietjen and the Board erred in not securing the prior assent thereto of the Board for Higher Education. Later, at the April 17, 1972 Board meeting Professor Ehlen made a presentation and responded to questions of Board members. In response to a query, he reaffirmed his March 20, 1972 STATEMENTS ON TWO SUBJECTS in which statement, with respect to Exodus 14, he said: "I had pointed out to my Pentateuch class that the later of two sources normally recognized in that chapter shows a heightening of the miraculous element in telling about the crossing of the Red Sea," thereby leaving open the question in the minds of the undersigned as to whether the facts there portrayed in Scripture are true. The undersigned do not believe Professor Ehlen correctly represents Scripture in this respect.

At different meetings various Board members solicited, indeed encouraged, Synodical President Preus to give the Board assistance in identifying and shedding light on theological and doctrinal issues. No *formal* request was made by the Board of President Preus for such an analysis, however, when he indicated a willingness to respond, no objections were made. Even though President Preus formally presented A STATEMENT OF SCRIPTURAL AND CONFESSIONAL PRINCIPLES to the Board, enumerating various issues, many of which apply to the Seminary, the *Statement* has yet to be corporately considered by the Board even in the face of its being branded un-Lutheran by the faculty. We note that the Synodical President again on May 17, 1972 at a meeting with the faculty requested the faculty to individually respond to the *Statement* but the faculty once again declined to do so.

II. Circumstances Affecting the Progress of the Board

Considerable time has been spent by the Board at its meetings on FFC report related matters but unfortunately a substantial portion of such time, if not the

most, has been spent on procedural matters rather than dealing with theological problems evident in some of the individual transcripts. Considering the gravity of the situation and the deep concerns evident throughout the Synod, the undersigned do not feel any significant amount of time has been spent on the FFC report, particularly since only ONE interview has been held on the basis of the FFC report. (The interviews with Professors Ehlen, Klein and Smith were for the purpose of contract renewal and use of the FFC report was proscribed.)

Regretfully, we must also report that the indiscretion of Board Chairman Loose in publicly attacking the President of the Synod in an April 1972 congregational communication (which received widespread publicity in the secular press as well as in the Synod) affected the Board's work.

III. Evaluation and Future Plans

While issues are spoken of and enumerated in the report of the Board, nowhere is it stated to be **ESSENTIAL** that the Board must with all due haste come to grips with the theology of **INDIVIDUAL PROFESSORS** as they practice it. The undersigned are dismayed and frustrated that further interviews have not been conducted or that the substance of the FFC report has not been discussed in Board meetings.

The Board already has received written charges by several pastors against a professor. It also has before it an arbitration proceeding involving certain professors and President Tietjen. These professors have alleged there are theological differences on the Seminary faculty as evidenced by the document titled "A Call to Openness and Trust," by the paper titled "A Preliminary Statement of Divergent Positions Existing Within the Departments of Systematic and Exegetical Theology," by the differences of the faculty with respect to use of the historical-critical method, and by the joint meeting of the systematics departments of the St. Louis and Springfield Seminaries among others. The Board surely must conclude these matters promptly.

We are alarmed at the statement of the Board that, "From one perspective the issue is not doctrine but method." (p.6) Indeed, we are alarmed by the entire paragraph. We suggest among other things that the Board study the CTCR document on "A Review of The Question What Is A Doctrine?," "A Lutheran Stance Toward Contemporary Biblical Studies," "Revelation, Inspiration and Inerrancy" etc.

The undersigned in their review of the FFC report noted items which cause them deep concern over the teaching at the Seminary. By way of illustration and not as a comprehensive listing some of these are hereinafter referred to. It is our considered opinion that the **SYNOD** must determine if **IT** is willing to agree that the following positions apparently held by various professors, for example, represent true fidelity to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

- A. (1) It is not necessary to believe there was a personal Adam, the first man, although the Apostle Paul as a man of that particular era probably believed Adam was a historical character.
- (2) That the Apostle Paul sees Adam as the representative of mankind and does not discuss the historicity of Adam and Eve.
- (3) That the Confessions do not discuss the historicity of Adam.
- B. (1) An unwillingness to pass an adverse judgment on one who does not accept the virgin birth until, for example, it is ascertained whether the person understands the Gospel or unless such a denial of the virgin birth limits, denies or destroys the Gospel process.
- (2) The reluctant concession is made that a seminary student who denies the virgin birth would have grave difficulty taking his ordination vow and signing the constitution (of Synod).
- C. The patriarch Abraham lacked the Gospel faith of sureness in a forthcoming Messiah. (Note: Compare this with the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article V, 23.)
- D. (1) An evolutionist position would not disqualify one from serving as a faculty member of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.
- (2) It is a viable option to accept theistic evolution.
- E. (1) That it might be possible that the miracle of Christ walking on water could be denied on the basis the account is a literary device used for a certain purpose.
- (2) That one should not exclude the possibility of miracles at every point on principle, but the other principle of the economy of miracles may induce acceptance of an alternate solution in certain cases.

- F. That the following are acceptable exegetical treatments of Matt. 12: 38-42 and Luke 11:29-32, namely: 1) that Matthew himself made up the story, 2) that Jesus held to the swallowing of Jonah by a fish as child of his times and 3) Jesus wasn't really attempting to answer the question whether Jonah was history or parable but used the account for purposes of illustration (admonition).
- G. That any discussion of the authority of Scripture must be considered in relation to the Gospel and not on the basis of "thus saith the Lord."
- H. That it is possible Abraham, Jacob and Isaac never really lived.
- I. That the concept of inspiration may properly be extended beyond the apostles, evangelists and prophets to include interpreters of Scripture and those who speak today.
- J. That the Scriptural record of a world flood need not be accepted.

President Preus and members of the Board for Higher Education, these are *more* than mere theological details. They involve doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures. Indeed, they involve the Gospel itself as well as confessional subscription. Consider this in light of the well publicized position of the faculty that it does not feel bound by doctrinal statements of Synod and it is understandable why the Synod's constituency is disturbed. In view of all of this we can not report in good conscience that there is no false doctrine. Indeed, is not the very doctrine of the Holy Scriptures involved? Has not the authority of the Scriptures been eroded by the application of the historical-critical method? Despite talk of Lutheran presuppositions, it is apparent that the typical presuppositions of the method as practiced by others are evident here. True, we still have the Gospel of justification by faith taught.

No one has denied or questioned the deity of Christ. Nevertheless, once the authority of the Scriptures has been qualified or eroded, who knows what the next development will be? Is not in fact refusal to insist on a fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion in itself false doctrine? If we do not openly report this to the church we also become a party to approval of these aberrations.

Respectfully submitted,

(signed) E. C. WEBER

WALTER C. DISSEN

6c. A Letter by Individual Member of The Board of Control

(Printed with the permission of the author)

St. Louis, Mo.
July 27, 1972

Board of Control
Concordia Seminary
801 De Mun Avenue
St. Louis, Mo. 63105

Attn: Rev. George Loose, Chairman

Gentlemen:

Please accept my sincere regrets over my impending absence from the Board meeting of July 31, 1972. Having resigned my position as vice-president of The Heitner Corporation and at the same time established my own firm of Communication Consultants, Inc., it is necessary for me to undergo an orientation seminar and conference of the national computer center I will be representing. This session begins on Sunday, July 30th, for one week precluding my Board meeting attendance as planned.

For the record though, I should like to emulate my new firm's desired image of communication lucidity on the subject of the "Minority Report" distributed earlier this week by Dr. Weber and Mr. Dissen, most of which is consistent with my own concerns and evaluations. Perhaps my approach is radically different

in that I prefer to avoid a *minority* report position since I believe it to be negative psychologically and contributing further to polarization.

In order to minimize any future polarizing, therefore my own concept would be to submit in substance the latter two sections of Dr. Weber's report as a "whereas" sequel to the interim report just made by the Board to President Preus and used as such as a preamble to a resolution for a definite plan of Board action in interviewing certain members of the faculty whose transcripts leave me and others with deep concern and numerous questions, which I referred to in my "issues" portion of the earlier Report Committee first draft. Though my points were for the most part sidestepped by Drs. Tietjen and Buege and teacher Nickel in the previous report, I went along on the basis that *the issues* are now the only remaining fulcrum supporting any future action on the F. F. C.

In my opinion, we as a Board have spent adequate classroom time studying motivations, techniques, theories and procedures. I firmly believe we should set an absolute deadline of February 1, 1973, for finalizing our report to the Synod via President Preus on the entire matter and, if necessary call a special weekend or three day meeting solely for interviews.

After my own complete reading of all F. F. C. transcripts I am personally convinced that our faculty has more and more isolated itself from the grass roots of everyday church members thinking and the level of communication receptivity to which they are accustomed.

It occurs to me that continual exposure to purely academic and theological associates and environment causes them to enlarge the "Ivory Tower" image-gap inherent through the years. (I believe Professors Coiner and Zeitler who accepted calls back to the parish among others, would agree to this, too.) Consequently the reaction of the mass-member-market and the stirring up of the people with recently developed, progressively modern theologies does not seemingly concern our idealistic academicians. Perhaps we, too, have acquired an immunity to the man on the street or John Q. Layman who holds tenaciously to a childlike faith and doesn't appreciate being classified as simplistic. It is apparent that we have, if we have come to believe with finality that there is still at this date no related elements or tentacles of false doctrine existing to any degree whatsoever simply because no individual with authority or group of colleagues has recorded a valid or legal *charge* against a specific brother or brethren.

The idea that historical critical methodology and all of its involvement can be left go unharnessed beyond the confines of classroom walls in what now seems to be somewhat of a cavalier fashion, to me is incredibly disintegrating. Perhaps a vivid comparison would be the overloading of a circuitry by revving up power-plant generators and exploding the light bulbs and tubes all down the line which were neither accustomed to, nor designed to, resist high-density output. Can we risk creating further doubts and disillusionment by continuing as though nothing, but nothing is wrong?

While I do not wish to rehash or go back over section I, I would, however, admonish the Board to consider adopting a timetable of definitive action to implement essentially the thorough consideration of sections II and III of Dr. Weber's report toward a conclusion by February 1, 1973. To do less in the eyes of our constituency and the church world would be further burying our heads in the sand and procrastinating further in the hopes that some magic spell will make it "all go away." I would also encourage a late August meeting of the Board as a proper start.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES H. BURMEISTER

7. STATEMENT BY THE SYNODICAL PRESIDENT

7a. To Sum Up

At this point, the reader has been supplied with the historical background, the action of the Board of Control, the findings and documentation of the Fact Finding Committee, and the analysis of the synodical President.

Before listing the actions which the synodical President is initiating at this time, it perhaps will be helpful to give a few introductory remarks relative to the matter of procedure.

Procedure has played a very large role in the overall response of the faculty to the fact finding endeavor and to many of the details connected with it. There has been much reference to the Constitution of the Synod, to Bylaws, to matters of faculty prerogative, to accreditation, but a rather disappointing amount of reference to Scripture, the Confessions, and the theological stance of the Synod.

However, some things need to be stated relative to procedure. In the first place, the point is made that the President of the Synod has not followed Matthew 18. It needs to be stipulated that the role of the President under Article XI of the Constitution, as supervisor of the doctrine and administration of the officers of the Synod (for example, the Board of Control) and the employees of the Synod (e. a., the faculty), is usually exercised through responsible individuals and not always on a personal and man to man basis. The Synod itself has provided for this by the creation of additional offices and boards and through Bylaw provisions for the responsibilities which they are to exercise.

For example, the President of the Synod is normally expected to carry out his supervisory duties over the doctrine of one of our synodical schools through the President of the institution, through the Board of Control, through the District President, and through the Board for Higher Education (in fact, doctrinal discipline of a pastor is carried out first of all not by the synodical President, but by the District President). Time does not permit, and synodical Bylaws do not envision, that the President of the church body deal personally and directly with all individuals in the Synod who are accused of false doctrine, or whom he himself may consider to be guilty of false doctrine.

Historical precedent on this matter is ample to show that this is the way in which synodical Presidents have carried out their duties. Long meetings were held in the past, under both Doctors Behnken and Harms, with the Board of Control and the administration of the seminary, relative to charges of doctrinal aberration on the part of individual professors.

The President of the Synod may on occasion have met with an individual professor relative to his doctrinal position, but there is no stipulation that this must be done.

However, the present President of the Synod is cognizant of the well-known regulative of Matthew 18, in which we are told to talk to our brother if we have "ought against him." In an attempt to be faithful to this Biblical injunction, and at the same time, to work through established channels of the Synod, the President has on a number of occasions talked directly with professors relative to their doctrinal position.

In most instances he has approached the President of the Seminary directly, both in private conversations and in meetings of the Board of Control.

He has also dealt directly with the Board of Control itself, of which the seminary president is a member, as indicated in the Report of the Board of Control.

He has also brought some of these matters to the attention of the Board for Higher Education.

In keeping with this regard for Matthew 18 and the observance of proper procedure, the President of the Synod also met directly with the faculty on May 17, 1972, and laid before the faculty a series of concerns he had relative to doctrine.

The President's *A Statement of Biblical and Confessional Principles*, which was prepared at the request of several of the Board of Control members, constitutes an attempt to give to the Board of Control information relative to doctrinal concerns which the President of the Synod had, a concern shared by many Board of Control members. The President of the Synod in a meeting with the Board of

Control also indicated which of the "rejects" of *A Statement* he regarded as applying to the seminary. It is most regrettable that the Board of Control has in no way reacted to this "Statement," because herein lay, at least according to the synodical President's view, a summary of the doctrinal problems which we face at the Seminary.

On May 17, the President of the Synod also asked the faculty members individually to react to his "Statement." Both the doctrinal concerns which the President expressed to the seminary faculty on May 17, as well as his request to the faculty, are appended to this document. The reply of the faculty is also appended. Please note that the faculty refused to reply individually to *A Statement*, and took no note of the doctrinal concerns.

Please note particularly the reply from the president of the seminary (Appendix VI c), who had been specifically singled out at the faculty meeting of May 17 with the question as to what he had done relative to doctrinal aberrations which had come to his attention through his personal attendance at each interview conducted by the Fact Finding Committee. The silence of the seminary president at this point is most significant, because he is by *Handbook* stipulation the first person who should be approached relative to doctrinal aberrations at the Seminary. This is even more significant when one considers the statements made by a particular professor at a state Pastoral Conference and at a meeting in one of the congregations in Saint Louis. These statements were brought directly to the attention of the seminary president and the Board of Control, but to date we have no evidence that the matter has been effectively dealt with by the president of the seminary.

The Report of the Board of Control also indicates that although the Synod at Milwaukee, in Resolution 2-28, gave the Board of Control one year to "commend or correct," the Board has not complied with the directive of the Synod. Thus the Board of Control is asking for more time. The statement of the minority of the board should be read in connection with the Report of the Board of Control itself.

Therefore, the question that faces the church is whether or not the Board of Control possesses sufficient unity within itself to address itself in a way which will result in "correction or commendation." It is quite disturbing to note the assertion that "to date we have found no false doctrine," especially when the statement of the minority is read in this context.

What shall we do at this point?

7b. Further Action

1. Bylaw 6.83 of the synodical *Handbook* states:

The Board of Control shall duly investigate all the facts and circumstances and shall refer its findings to the Board for Higher Education when a member of the administrative or teaching staff of any institution is to be formally charged with contumacious refusal to cooperate with the president and faculty of the institution and officers and boards of the Synod to an extent that will injure or interfere with the purpose and objectives of the institution, or with willful neglect of official duties, or with conduct unbecoming a Christian, or with promulgation of and adherence to false doctrine. If the Board for Higher Education concurs in the findings, it shall make necessary recommendations to the District President, who is to proceed according to Sections 5.11 ff., with the provision, however, that in the event of a suspension the case shall be submitted to the synodical Commission of Adjudication.

The Fact Finding Committee Report indicates, as the present document makes abundantly clear,¹ that some professors at the Seminary hold views contrary to the established doctrinal position of the Synod. Who they are can be determined readily by the Board of Control from the transcripts. The synodical President is therefore asking the Board of Control, which has requested more time, to deal with those professors who hold such views to determine whether, since the date of their interviews, they still hold these views and, if so, to take the action prescribed in the Bylaws, especially Bylaw 6.83.

The President is asking the Board of Control to give a completed report to him by February 1, so that the President in turn can prepare his final report

¹ Cf. Sections 3, 4, and 5 of this report, and Appendices IV, VI a, VI b, VI c.

to the 1973 convention. The convention will then decide whether the action of the Seminary Board of Control is satisfactory or, if not, prescribe whatever action the convention determines proper and appropriate.

It should also be noted that the synodical convention is the supreme body which has the power to settle all such matters, but it would be most distressing if it becomes necessary for the convention to address itself to these matters. However, it is the firm conviction of your President that these matters must be settled and must be settled at the earliest possible opportunity, so that the church can go about the business to which our Lord has called it.

2. Since Dr. John Tietjen, president of the seminary, has identified himself with the views referred to above;² since "the Synod, its boards, and its members shall first of all hold him responsible in all matters pertaining to the institution" (*Handbook* 6.91); since he has indicated in his answer to the synodical President's request³ that he considers a response to that request to be "a responsibility which the Synod has given to the Board of Control"⁴ despite the statement of Bylaw 6.91: "The president of each of the Synod's institutions shall be the spiritual, academic, and administrative head thereof and shall be the executive officer of the Board of Control"; since he states that he has already "assured" himself "through personal discussions with the professors that they are not teaching contrary to their confessional commitment"⁵ despite the fact that he was present at every interview conducted by the Fact Finding Committee and thus has knowledge of everything in the committee's report; therefore the President of the Synod is asking the Seminary Board of Control to deal personally and first of all with President John Tietjen (a) as to his own confessional stance and (b) as to his failure to exercise the supervision of the doctrine of the faculty as prescribed in the synodical *Handbook*.

3. The President of the Synod is calling upon the Board of Control, and through that board the administration of the faculty, to direct the faculty that, beginning with classes in the school year 1972-73 no faculty member shall in any way, shape, or form, in class lectures, in private consultations with students, in articles written for public consumption, or at pastoral conferences use any method of interpretation which casts doubt on the divine authority of the Scriptures and thus also on the Gospel itself, questions the historicity or factuality of events described in Scripture as actually having taken place, calls into question the reality of any Biblical miracle, vitiates the validity of the testimony of Christ and the New Testament writers in their references to the Old Testament, casts a shadow on the factualness of the Gospel accounts of the ministry of Christ, or in any other way departs from the doctrinal position of the Synod as set forth in Article II of the Constitution.

This position of the Synod in terms of its application of the Scriptures and the Confessions to various issues of our day has been abundantly set forth in resolutions of the Synod, many of which are included in this report. In other words, the faculty is to be asked to teach in keeping with the doctrinal position of the church which employs them, calls them, and asks them to prepare its future pastors, and in this way "to honor and to uphold" such resolutions of the Synod.⁶

4. The President of the Synod is calling upon the Board for Higher Education and the District President immediately to involve themselves in the foregoing procedures to the fullest extent under the governing provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws.

² E. g., his Statement on Historical Critical Method to the seminary community, March 6, 1972: "If the phrase, higher critical view, refers to the use of historical-critical methodology, then it is not possible for Dr. Ehlen to teach any of his assigned courses at a seminary level of instruction, thus taking the text of the Holy Scriptures with utter seriousness, without using historical-critical methodology. Nor is that possible for any other faculty member who teaches a course in Biblical interpretation, regardless of the department to which he may belong."

³ Cf. President's letter of May 17, p. 12, Appendix VI a.

⁴ Dr. Tietjen's letter to Dr. Preus, Appendix VI c.

⁵ Cf. his letter, Appendix VI c.

⁶ Cf. Cleveland convention "Proceedings," Res. 3-17, p. 105; New York convention "Workbook," II B, 7, p. 47, and Appendix E, p. 51; New York convention "Proceedings," Res. 2-04, p. 88, et alii.

8. EPILOG

Now let me speak very personally and pastorally.

In our seminaries we are preparing men who will spend their lives on the brink of eternity.

The transcripts indicate that to many of the professors theology seems to be something to be discussed with pros and cons, something for dialog and friendly discussion, something on which very few ultimate decisions are possible or should be attempted. What seems to be missing is the conviction, the certainty, the clarion note that the church has a right to expect from those preparing men for the ministry in which "Thus saith the Lord!" should ring from all pulpits — pulpits where the Law comes forth in all its damning enormity and the Gospel is sounded with its grace, tenderness, and forgiveness. We need clear and convincing faith on the part of pastors who must minister to the dying, to children who are being nurtured in the fear and admonition of the Lord, to Christians beset by problems and temptations, to those who know not Christ, and to those who feel that they have lost Him.

The world and the church do not need more questions or more debates. We need answers, given with conviction and certainty by men who know that their Redeemer lives and that He is the answer to the problems of human need.

Perhaps as basic as the doctrinal problem is the attitudinal problem. The church cries for answers. The world needs men who confess, profess, and proclaim God's Word in all its power, clarity, and truth — not doubt, not uncertainty, not confusion, not theological debate. It is my prayer that God will give us such men, both as professors at our seminaries and as pastors in our parishes.

Never before in the history of modern Christendom has a church body, its congregations, its lay members, its teachers, and its pastors had an opportunity for such a frank, forthright, and open discussion as to what its doctrinal stance will be. We stand at the crossroads. We can continue to be the Biblical, confessional, orthodox, witnessing church that under God we have been for 125 years. No one can dispute that God has richly blessed us, despite our frailties, our sins, and our humanness. Nothing less than the grace of God has sustained and blessed us for these 125 years.

Now we stand at the crossroads. Which way shall we go? The issues are before the church; the facts are in. On the one hand, we must preserve constitutional forms of church government, concern for the rights of individuals, and the desire that all things be done decently and in order. On the other hand, our doctrinal basis is at stake. We do not stand under the judgment of man, nor of one another. We stand under the judgment of Almighty God, who has given us His Word, who sees all things and judges all hearts. The case now lies before the church. It is evident that the use of the historical-critical method has brought about changes both in our doctrinal stance, our certainty, and our attitudes toward doctrine. And unless things change at our Seminary, this trend will continue. It is becoming increasingly clear that we have two theologies. With the influential position the Seminary holds in the church, its views will prevail unless the Synod directs otherwise and sees to it that its directives are implemented.

What shall we do? Which way shall we go? Shall we follow the path of so many churches which have lost part or nearly all of God's Word and thus the Gospel itself? I hope and pray that we shall rise up with Paul and Luther and the great confessors of the church and with the founding fathers of our Synod and say with Joshua of old, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," and pray with Luther in his explanation to the petition of the Lord's Prayer, "that God's Word may be taught in its truth and purity and we as the children of God lead holy lives according to it."

Therefore I am calling upon the church to repent of our lack of faith, our love of the world, our fractiousness, our lovelessness, our taking liberties with sacred things, our slowness to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest His Word," our lukewarmness in witness, our failure in Christian living and brotherly love.

I am calling the church to faith — faith in the Holy Scriptures, which bring us the precious Gospel, faith in the power of God to rectify our mistakes and correct our errors, faith which, based on God's Word, can reconcile us, unite us, and move us to mutual love and dedication.

Therefore I am calling upon every member of Synod to pray with fervency and faith that God would bless us and "keep us steadfast in His Word and work."

I am calling the church to service. In a world which is dying without the Lord Jesus Christ, we have made a spectacle of ourselves with our politicking, our infighting, our bickering. Let us cease this kind of thing.

Therefore I am calling upon our church, all of us — pastors, teachers, and laymen — to gird up our loins and be about the business which we all know is the church's business, namely, to proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ by our words and by our deeds that through our church God's name may be hallowed, His will may be done, and His kingdom come for the benefit of the whole Christian church and for the world itself.

Lord Jesus, help us truly to be the church you want us to be!

J. A. O. Preus, *President*
The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod

APPENDICES

Appendix I a

Statements Adopted by the Faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

1. Affirmations on Unity

Because announcements about criticisms leveled against the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, could lead members of the Synod to doubt the faithfulness of the faculty to its confessional commitment and in order to reassure the members of the Synod concerning the confessional position of the faculty, the undersigned members of the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, make this declaration:

1. We affirm with the constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (Article II) and in keeping with our vows of ordination and installation that we accept without reservation the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice and all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God.

2. We affirm with the Augsburg Confession (Article VII) that it is sufficient for the true unity of the Christian church that the Gospel be preached in conformity with a pure understanding of it and that the sacraments be administered in accordance with the divine Word.

3. We affirm with the Formula of Concord (Solid Declaration) that the primary requirement for basic and permanent concord within the church is a summary formula

and pattern, unanimously approved, in which the summarized doctrine commonly confessed by the churches of the pure Christian religion is drawn together out of the Word of God; that for us the summary formula and pattern consists of those public and well-known symbols or common confessions which have at all times and in all places been accepted in all the churches of the Augsburg Confession and which are contained in the Book of Concord of 1580; and that we shall neither prepare nor accept a different or a new confession of our faith as the requirement for basic and permanent concord within the church. (Adopted Nov. 3, 1970. 41 professors signed the statement before it was released.)

— *Concordia Theological Monthly*, XLII, No. 1 (Jan. 1971), p. 46 (Previously published in *Lutheran Witness Reporter*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Nov. 15, 1970, p. 2, under heading "Declaration of Members of the Faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis," and as signed by the following: Mark P. Bangert, Victor Bartling, Robert R. Bergt, Robert W. Bertram, Herbert J. A. Bouman, K. H. Breimeier, Richard R. Caemmerer Sr., Robert L. Conrad, John W. Constable, John S. Damm, Frederick W. Danker, David E. Deppe, Arlis J. Ehlen, Alfred O. Fuerbringer, Paul F. Goetting, Carl Graesser Jr., Robert A. Grunow, Lucille Hager, George W. Hoyer, C. E. Huber, Holland H. Jones, Everett R. Kalin, Wi Jo Kang, Ralph W. Klein, Edgar M. Krentz, Paul G. Lessmann, E. L. Lueker, Herbert T. Mayer, Duane P. Mehl, Carl S. Meyer, Eldon E. Pederson, Arthur Carl Piepkorn, Arthur C. Repp, Kenneth J. Sless, Robert H. Smith, Gilbert Amadeus Thiele, John H. Tietjen, Arthur M. Vincent, Carl A. Volz, Walter Wegner, Robert J. Werberig, Andrew M. Weyermann, L. C. Wuerffel)

Appendix I b

An Explanation to Our Brethren

We the undersigned members of the faculty of Concordia Seminary wish to share with our brethren on the faculty and in the Synod our convictions regarding the "Declaration of the Faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis," adopted November 3, 1970.

In order that our brethren on the faculty and in the church may fully understand our decision not to subscribe to the "Declaration," we herewith assure them that our decision was made with full commitment to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions and in a spirit of genuine love and concern for the seminary and the church.

We respectfully and fraternally offer the following reasons for our decision:

1. We are concerned that the issuing of such a declaration at this time, when the seminary faculty is to be investigated, may be regarded in our synod as a device to neutralize or impede the investigation of our seminary.

2. We are convinced that there are basic theological differences within the faculty, including matters pertaining both to the interpretation of Holy Scripture and to the

meaning of confessional subscription in the Lutheran Church. In the present context we believe that the "Declaration," by its failure to call attention to the existence of such differences, will be seriously misunderstood by our Synod.

Since our integrity as theologians of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod compels us to offer this explanation of our decision, we respectfully and fraternally request that our explanation accompany any publicity pertaining to the "Declaration."

Signed by:

Ralph A. Bohlmann
Richard Klann
Robert Preus
Martin H. Scharlemann
Lorenz Wunderlich

November 4, 1970 Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

— *Lutheran Witness Reporter*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Nov. 15, 1970, p. 2

Appendix II

Statements Adopted by the Faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

2. The Gospel, Our Confession, and Doctrinal Statements

In the present discussion of the relation of synodically adopted doctrinal statements to the confessional position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, affirms the following:

1. The confessional position of The Lutheran Church—

Missouri Synod is stated in Article II of the Synod's constitution. The Synod requires that its members accept without reservation the Scriptures as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice and all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God. The Synod does not have a confessional or a

doctrinal position other than or in addition to what is stated in Article II.

II. Doctrinal statements adopted at conventions of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod can serve an important function in the life of the Synod. They reflect how successfully a delegate convention applied the doctrine of the Scriptures and of the Lutheran Confessions to issues and problems of the day. Conventions of the Synod have asked the Synod's members to honor and uphold the doctrinal content of these synodically adopted statements, because they express the conviction of fathers and brothers with whom all members of the Synod are united in their obedience to the Scriptures and the Confessions. The way to honor and uphold these statements is carefully to study them and to determine how well they do in fact apply to contemporary issues the truth of the Gospel drawn from the Scriptures and affirmed in the Lutheran Confessions.

III. Synodically adopted doctrinal statements are not included in the Synod's confessional commitment, which Article II of the synodical constitution confidently entrusts to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions alone. The bold assumption here is that the best and most adequate safeguard of the truthfulness of the Scriptures is a simply confessional reading of them, subordinating their law to their distinctive promise and thus maximizing the benefits of Christ. But there is also a temptation to the contrary,

namely, to assume that for the safety of the Scriptures such a confessional reading is not sufficiently trustworthy, indeed that it may even coddle disrespect for them. When that fear prevails, then synodically adopted doctrinal statements are forced into a new role as criteria of confessional and doctrinal fidelity. Such misuse of them is not only unconstitutional but strikes at the heart of the Lutheran confessional principle.

IV. The Lutheran Confessions, including the Ecumenical Creeds, were gifts of God to the church in times of crisis or special need. Under similar circumstances the church may receive the ability to witness to the Gospel in new confessional formulations to meet new needs. For The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and all other Lutherans such a subsequent confession would have to presuppose and safeguard the doctrine of the Gospel which is confessed in the Lutheran symbols. The adoption of such subsequent confessions would require not merely majority approval at a delegate synod or series of synods but the voluntary and unreserved acceptance by all those for whom it is to function as a confession, that is, every clergyman and teacher, and each congregation in the synod. (Adopted Nov. 24, 1970)

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Appendix III

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

210 NORTH BROADWAY • SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI 63102

TELEPHONE 314-231-6969

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

March 3, 1972

*A Letter to the Members of
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod:
Congregations, Pastors, Teachers*

Dear Brethren in Christ:

May I take this opportunity to wish all of you a very blessed and meaningful Lenten Season.

As we meditate on the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins and for our eternal hope, may we be drawn ever closer to the Word, which brings us to Him and to His wounds, His suffering, His death, and His resurrection.

In this letter to the Synod I wish to bring to you a report of basic importance. You are all aware that there have been a great many dealings in recent times with Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, relative to the doctrinal stance of the seminary. You will also recall that the Synod in its Milwaukee Convention (Resolution 2-28) instructed the president of the Synod to report to the Synod the progress made by the board of control of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, relative to the Report of the Fact Finding Committee. It stipulated that the report be made "within one year." I am planning to present a comprehensive report to the Synod before the July 1972 deadline. However, recent developments at the St. Louis seminary have made an earlier progress report advisable. Also the action of the board of control relative to Prof. Arlis Ehlen, as well as my own presidential exercise of the supervision of doctrine in this instance, have received widespread publicity. I owe it to the church to provide you with the facts in the situation.

While the board of control of the St. Louis seminary acted on the basis of interviews conducted with Dr. Ehlen without specific reference to the Fact Finding Committee Report, my own questions in the interviews with Dr. Ehlen were largely guided by information from the Fact Finding Committee Report which served to alert me to the issues involved. It will be remembered that the Fact Finding Committee's first responsibility was to report to me. I in turn passed the report on to the board of control.

While the board of control has not yet finished its own study of the Fact Finding Committee Report, nevertheless, this communication to you may be regarded as a partial discharge of my duties under the Milwaukee Convention Resolution 2-28.

May I discuss the matter chronologically. The four-year contract of Dr. Arlis Ehlen, assistant Professor in Old Testament at the St. Louis seminary, came up for renewal at the

board of control meeting of Dec. 13, 1971. Extension of the contract on a four-year basis would have involved the granting of permanent tenure. At this meeting the board discussed Dr. Ehlen's theological position with him. As the interview progressed, considerable time was spent on the position of Dr. Ehlen regarding the doctrine of angels and a personal devil. At this meeting the board first resolved not to renew Dr. Ehlen's contract, then considered and finally tabled a motion to reconsider its action.

At a special meeting the board held on Dec. 20, Dr. Ehlen made a confession of his faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and also reported that he through personal study and counsel from his brother faculty members had become convinced of the existence of angels and a personal devil.

In further discussion in this meeting, a discussion in which all members of the board, as well as the undersigned, participated, another problem arose relative to the doctrinal stance of Dr. Ehlen. He was very frank to state that, although he believed the Exodus account to be the Word of God and to be inspired, he did not believe certain miraculous events recorded in Scripture in connection with the Exodus had actually taken place. There was not then and there is not now any question as to Dr. Ehlen's personal honesty, integrity, or sincerity in the positions he adopts relating to such doctrinal stances. After a long discussion in this meeting the board of control again decided not to renew his contract.

Again in January the matter came before the board, and the board took no positive action. No cause for the action of the board was ever given by the board. Thus it is impossible for me to speak for the board. And I am not doing so in this letter. However, there has been a great deal of public speculation on this matter. Much of this speculation was erroneous.

Finally in February the board met again. The members of the board first tabled a motion to renew the contract of Dr. Ehlen. Later, however, in a reportedly close vote the board resolved to renew Dr. Ehlen's contract for one year.

Had I been a member of the board, I am frank to say, I would not have voted for the renewal of Dr. Ehlen's contract because of the fact that he was unable to state that he believed in the historical facticity of certain of the miraculous elements surrounding the Exodus of the people of Israel from the Egyptian captivity. This position has serious implications for the teaching in our congregations because it means that our future ministers are being taught theories concerning the origin of portions of God's Word which create doubt as to whether the events recorded in the Scriptures actually happened.

May I clarify my position in this matter. Under the Constitution of the Synod, your synodical president has the responsibility to see to it that the teaching at our schools is in keeping with the Word of God as we have been taught it, understand it, and have applied it heretofore. It was out of this regard that I originally proposed that the board not reappoint Dr. Ehlen. I suggested that the time intervening between the December meeting and the end of his contract period on June 30, 1972, be utilized to minister to him and to see if it was possible to achieve full confidence that he was teaching in accordance with the Word of God. We have every reason to believe that the board, in renewing the contract for one year, will certainly want to see to it that Dr. Ehlen is standing firmly on the Word of God as we have been taught it, understand it, and have applied it.

I am confident that the board seeks to gain this assurance also with reference to all other professors. I am happy to report that the board at its February meeting resolved: "To complete its independent study of the Fact Finding Committee Report by: (a) isolating the issues, (b) asking the president of the seminary to structure meetings with faculty members to discuss the issues, (c) taking appropriate action."

Meanwhile I have written to the president of the seminary that Dr. Ehlen not be permitted to teach courses "in which he would have opportunity to advocate his higher critical views concerning Biblical interpretation" until it has been satisfactorily determined that his doctrinal position is in complete accord with the Bible and the confessional position of our church as we have been taught it. (This in no way nullifies the board's extension of Dr. Ehlen's contract.)

May I speak now of a related matter. The question has arisen in the board of control as to how the board is to make such a determination. This is not quite so simple as it appears because virtually all Christian churches and Christian theologies, whether they agree with one another or not, claim to stand on the Word of God. The Bible and the Lutheran Confessions, as you well know, have been variously interpreted. Our Synod, down through the years, has attempted to meet these problems by enunciating its understanding of the Scriptures and the Confessions. The Synod has adopted various doctrinal statements at different times and in different ways.

In an effort to give aid to the board of control, I have attempted in consultation with the vice-presidents of the Synod to draw up a set of theological principles or guidelines which the board of control could use as it carries out its duties under Resolution 2-28 of the Milwaukee Convention. I believe that every sentence in these theses is derived directly from the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions; in many cases the language is that of the Synod as it applied the Scriptures and the Confessions to new problems throughout the years in the light of Article II of the Synod's Constitution. The vice-presidents of the Synod join me in the opinion that these guidelines are Biblical and confessional.

The purpose of these guidelines is not to serve as a new standard of orthodoxy, but rather to assist the board of control in identifying areas which need further attention in terms of the Synod's doctrinal position. The board of control may well request the faculty members of the St. Louis seminary to indicate their stance toward these guidelines.

I am sending you the guidelines for your information as a part of this preliminary report. You may want to study them in conferences and in congregations.

In the matter of the St. Louis seminary we are finally at the point of ceasing debate on procedural matters and getting down to a discussion of theological issues, and I believe that, under God, we will arrive at a true unity in doctrine

and at a greater degree of unanimity in practice and in devotion to our Lord and to His Word. Please pray for the board of control, for the president and faculty of the seminary, and for all of us who are charged with the responsibility of keeping our church faithful to the Word of God and our Lutheran confessional position.

It is quite obvious to me that some things must be changed. I am convinced that there has been teaching which is at variance with the way in which our Synod understands the Word of God and its confessional position.

I want to assure the church that my chief aim in these matters is for us to be a soundly Lutheran Synod. This is a matter of our Christian faith. In this connection may I remind you that the questions concerning doctrinal matters with which we now wrestle are matters which also concerned my immediate predecessors in office. As early as 1959 President John W. Behnken warned in a document proposed for use in interviewing prospective instructors and professors, "European theology is infiltrating the American churches, also Lutheran churches." He listed a number of topics which were a matter of concern to him and which were to be included in the interviews. It is significant that these are the same topics that trouble us now. His list includes: verbal or plenary inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy of Holy Writ, the historicity of Scriptural accounts, the parabolic interpretation of Genesis 1-11, Messianic prophecies, and a proper regard for the facticity of the miracle accounts.

Doctor Oliver R. Harms, during his presidency, had similar concerns and pursued them with the faculty and board of control of the St. Louis seminary.

Both of my highly honored predecessors were deeply concerned over doctrinal purity and unity in the Synod. Thus your president today is attempting to follow a noble example. The difference, if any, from previous generations is that the historic scene today demands an immediate resolution of the doctrinal issues that sprouted in earlier years and that are in full bloom today. Our church faces a great crisis. It is a crisis of faith and confession.

Few, if any, among us would deny the possibility of miracles on principle. However, the use of a technique of Biblical interpretation which leads in practice to the denial of miraculous events in the Scriptures reminds us that it is only a short step from a denial of the miraculous elements surrounding the greatest redemptive act of the Old Testament (the Exodus) to a denial of the miraculous elements in the greatest redemptive act of all—the deliverance from sin, death, and hell. I am thinking in particular of the miracles of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His resurrection from the dead.

I say these things in this Lenten season, when we again meditate on this great deliverance, fully aware of my own daily need of the forgiving grace of Christ which is given to us all through His suffering and death. We in our beloved Synod have not always conducted ourselves as children of God. I want to be the first to confess that I need God's grace in my weakness.

We have the richest of all treasures in the Gospel of the crucified and risen Savior. May we gather this Lenten season in the shadow of His cross, hear His Word, and in this our 125th year as a Synod go forth renewed in faith and life. Let our hearts burn within us as did the hearts of the Emmaus disciples on Easter evening. Together we go forth into the world with the saving message of the risen Christ!

In His name

J. A. O. Preus
President

Appendix IV

A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles

I. Christ as Savior and Lord

We believe, teach, and confess that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Lord, and that through faith in Him we receive forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation. We confess that "our works cannot reconcile God or merit forgiveness of sins and grace but that we obtain forgiveness and grace only by faith when we believe that we are received into favor for Christ's sake, who alone has been ordained to be the mediator and propitiation through whom the Father

is reconciled" (AC, XX, 9). We believe that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven and that all who die without faith in Him are eternally damned. We believe that those who believe in Christ will enjoy a blissful relationship with Him during the interim between their death and His second coming and that on the last day their bodies will be raised.

We therefore reject the following:

1. That we may operate on the assumption that there may be other ways of salvation than through faith in Jesus Christ;

2. That some persons who lack faith in Christ may be considered "anonymous Christians";

3. That there is no eternal hell for unbelievers and ungodly men.

II. Law and Gospel

We believe that the two chief doctrines of Holy Scripture, Law and Gospel, must be constantly and diligently proclaimed in the church of God until the end of the world, but with due distinction (FC, SD, V, 24). The Law, as the expression of God's immutable will, is to be used by the church to bring men to a knowledge of their sins as well as to provide Christians with instruction about good works (FC, SD, V, 17-18). The Gospel receives the primary emphasis in the ministry of the New Testament, for it is the message that "God forgives them all their sins through Christ, accepts them for His sake as God's children, and out of pure grace, without any merit of their own, justifies and saves them." (FC, SD, V, 25)

We therefore reject the following:

1. That the Gospel is any message or action which brings good news to a bad situation.

2. That the Gospel is a norm or standard for the Christian life, or that the Gospel, in effect, imposes a new law upon the Christian.

3. That what God's law declares to be sinful (for example, adultery or theft) need not be regarded as sinful in all times and situations.

4. That Christians, as men who have been freed from the curse of the Law, no longer need the instruction of the Law to know what God's will is for their life and conduct.

III. Mission of the Church

We believe, teach, and confess that the primary mission of the church is to make disciples of every nation by bearing witness to Jesus Christ through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. Other necessary activities of the church, such as ministering to men's physical needs, are to serve the church's primary mission and its goal that men will believe and confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

We therefore reject any views of the mission of the church which imply:

That an adequate or complete witness to Jesus Christ can be made without proclaiming or verbalizing the Gospel.

IV. Holy Scripture

A. The Inspiration of Scripture

We believe, teach, and confess that all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit and that God is therefore the true Author of every word of Scripture. We acknowledge that there is a qualitative difference between the inspired witness of Holy Scripture in all its parts and words and the witness of every other form of human expression, making the Bible a unique book.

We therefore reject the following views:

1. That the Holy Scriptures are inspired only in the sense that all Christians are "inspired" to confess the lordship of Jesus Christ.

2. That the Holy Spirit did not inspire the actual words of the Biblical authors but merely provided these men with special guidance.

3. That only those matters in Holy Scripture were inspired by the Holy Spirit which directly pertain to Jesus Christ and man's salvation.

4. That noncanonical writings in the Christian tradition can be regarded as "inspired" in the same sense as Holy Scripture.

5. That portions of the New Testament witness to Jesus Christ contain imaginative additions which had their origin in the early Christian community and do not present actual facts.

B. The Purpose of Scripture

We believe that all Scripture bears witness to Jesus Christ and that its primary purpose is to make men wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. We therefore affirm that the Scriptures are rightly used only when they

are read from the perspective of justification by faith and the proper distinction between Law and Gospel. Since the saving work of Jesus Christ was accomplished through His personal entrance into our history and His genuinely historical life, death, and resurrection, we acknowledge that the recognition of the soteriological purpose of Scripture in no sense permits us to call into question or deny the historicity or factuality of matters recorded in the Bible.

We therefore reject the following views:

1. That knowing the facts and data presented in the Scripture, without relating them to Jesus Christ and His work of salvation, represents an adequate approach to Holy Scripture.

2. That the Old Testament, read on its own terms, does not bear witness to Jesus Christ.

3. That it is permissible to reject the historicity of events or the occurrence of miracles recorded in the Scriptures so long as there is no confusion of Law and Gospel.

4. That recognition of the primary purpose of Scripture makes it irrelevant whether such questions of fact as the following are answered in the affirmative: Were Adam and Eve real historical individuals? Did Israel cross the Red Sea on dry land? Did the brazen serpent miracle actually take place? Was Jesus really born of a virgin? Did Jesus perform all the miracles attributed to him? Did Jesus' resurrection actually involve the return to life of His dead body?

C. The Gospel and Holy Scripture

(Material and Formal Principles)

We believe, teach, and confess that the Gospel of the gracious justification of the sinner through faith in Jesus Christ is not only the chief doctrine of Holy Scripture and a basic presupposition for the interpretation of Scripture, but the heart and center of our Christian faith and theology (material principle). We also believe, teach, and confess that only "the Word of God shall establish articles of faith" (SA, II, ii, 15), and that "the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachers alike must be appraised and judged" (FC, Ep, Rule and Norm, 1) (formal principle). The Gospel which is the center of our theology is the Gospel to which the Scriptures bear witness, while the Scriptures from which we derive our theology direct us steadfastly to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We reject the following distortions of the relationship between the Gospel and the Bible (the material and formal principles):

1. That acceptance of the Bible as such, rather than the Gospel, is the heart and center of Christian faith and theology, and the way to eternal salvation.

2. That the Gospel, rather than Scripture, is the norm for appraising and judging all doctrines and teachers (as, for example, when a decision on the permissibility of ordaining women into the pastoral office is made on the basis of the "Gospel" rather than on the teaching of Scripture as such).

3. That the historicity or facticity of certain Biblical accounts (such as the Flood or the Fall) may be questioned, provided this does not distort the Gospel.

4. That Christians need not accept matters taught in the Scriptures that are not a part of the "Gospel."

D. The Authority of Scripture

We believe, teach, and confess that because the Scriptures have God as their author, they possess both the divine power to make men wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (causative authority), as well as the divine authority to serve as the church's sole standard of doctrine and life (normative authority). We recognize that the authority of Scripture can be accepted only through faith and not merely by rational demonstration. As men of faith, we affirm not only that Holy Scripture is powerful and efficacious, but also that it is "the only judge, rule, and norm according to which as the only touchstone all doctrines should and must be understood and judged as good or evil, right or wrong." (FC, Ep, Rule and Norm, 7)

We therefore reject the following views:

1. That the authority of Scripture is limited to its efficacy in bringing men to salvation in Jesus Christ.

2. That the authority of Scripture has reference only to what the Scriptures do (as means of grace) rather than to what they are (as the inspired Word of God).

3. That the Scriptures are authoritative for the doctrine

and life of the church, not because of their character as the inspired and inerrant Word of God but because they are the oldest available written sources for the history of ancient Israel and for the life and message of Jesus Christ, or because they were written by the chosen and appointed leaders of Israel and of the early church, or because the church declared them to be canonical.

4. That the Christian community in every age is directly inspired by the Holy Spirit and is therefore free to go beyond the doctrine of the prophets and apostles in determining the content of certain aspects of its faith and witness.

E. The Canonical Text of Scripture

We believe, teach, and confess that the authoritative Word for the church today is the *canonical* Word, not pre-canonical sources, forms, or traditions—however useful the investigation of these possibilities may on occasion be for a clearer understanding of what the canonical text intends to say.

We therefore reject the following views:

1. That there are various “meanings” of a Biblical text or pericope to be discovered at various stages of its pre-canonical history, or that the meaning of a canonical text has now may differ from the meaning it had when it was first written.

2. That Biblical materials that are judged to be “authentic” (for example, “authentic” words of Jesus, “authentic” books of Paul, or “authentic” ideas of Moses) have greater authority than “non-authentic” Biblical statements.

3. That certain pericopes or passages in the canonical text of Scripture may be regarded as imaginative additions of the Biblical authors or of the early Christian community and therefore need not be accepted as fully authoritative.

4. That extracanonical sources may be used in such a way as to call into question the clear meaning of the canonical text.

5. That the essential theological data of Biblical theology is to be found in the precanonical history of the Biblical text.

6. That certain canonical materials have greater authority than other canonical materials because of their greater antiquity or because they are allegedly more “genuine” or “authentic.”

7. That various statements of Jesus recorded in the Gospels may not actually be from Jesus and therefore lack historical factuality or the full measure of His authority.

F. The Infallibility of Scripture

With Luther, we confess that “God’s Word cannot err” (LC, IV, 57). We therefore believe, teach, and confess that since the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, they contain no errors or contradictions but that they are in all their parts and words the infallible truth. We hold that the opinion that Scripture contains errors is a violation of the *sola scriptura* principle, for it rests upon the acceptance of some norm or criterion of truth above the Scriptures. We recognize that there are apparent contradictions or discrepancies and problems which arise because of uncertainty over the original text.

We reject the following views:

1. That the Scriptures contain theological as well as factual contradictions and errors.

2. That the Scriptures are inerrant only in matters pertaining directly to the Gospel message of salvation.

3. That the Scriptures are only functionally inerrant, that is, that the Scriptures are “inerrant” only in the sense that they accomplish their aim of bringing the Gospel of salvation to men.

4. That the Biblical authors accommodated themselves to using and repeating as true the erroneous notions of their day (for example, the claim that Paul’s statements on the role of women in the church are not binding today because they are the culturally conditioned result of the apostle’s sharing the views of contemporary Judaism as a child of his time).

5. That statements of Jesus and the New Testament writers concerning the human authorship of portions of the Old Testament or the historicity of certain Old Testament persons and events need not be regarded as true (for example, the Davidic authorship of Psalm 110, the historicity of Jonah, or the fall of Adam and Eve).

6. That only those aspects of a Biblical statement need to be regarded as true that are in keeping with the alleged *intent* of the passage (for example, that Paul’s statement

about Adam and Eve in Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 11 do not prove the historicity of Adam and Eve because this was not the specific intent of the apostle; or that the virgin birth of our Lord may be denied because the infancy narratives in Matthew and Luke did not have the specific intent to discuss a biological miracle).

7. That Jesus did not make some of the statements or perform some of the deeds attributed to Him in the Gospels but that they were in fact invented or created by the early Christian community or the evangelists to meet their specific needs.

8. That the Biblical authors sometimes placed statements into the mouths of people who in fact did not make them (for example, the claim that the “Deuteronomist” places a speech in Solomon’s mouth which Solomon never actually made), or that they relate events as having actually taken place that did not in fact occur (for example, the fall of Adam and Eve, the crossing of the Red Sea on dry land, the episode of the brazen serpent, Jesus’ cursing of the fig tree, John the Baptist’s experiences in the wilderness, Jesus’ changing water into wine, Jesus’ walking on water, or even Jesus’ bodily resurrection from the dead or the fact of His empty tomb).

9. That the use of certain “literary forms” necessarily calls into question the historicity of that which is being described (for example, that the alleged midrashic form of the infancy narratives in Matthew and Luke suggests that no virgin birth actually occurred, or that the literary form of Genesis 3 argues against the historicity of the Fall).

G. The Unity of Scripture

We believe, teach, and confess that since the same God speaks throughout Holy Scripture, there is an organic unity both within and between the Old and New Testaments. While acknowledging the rich variety of language and style in Scripture and recognizing differences of emphasis in various accounts of the same event or topic, we nevertheless affirm that the same doctrine of the Gospel, in all its articles, is presented throughout the entire Scripture.

We reject the view that Holy Scripture, both within and between its various books and authors, presents us with conflicting or contradictory teachings and theologies. We regard this view not only as violating the Scripture’s own understanding of itself but also as making it impossible for the church to have and confess a unified theological position that is truly Biblical and evangelical.

H. Old Testament Prophecy

Since the New Testament is the culminating written revelation of God, we affirm that it is decisive in determining the relation between the two Testaments and the meaning of Old Testament prophecies in particular, for the meaning of a prophecy becomes known in full only from its fulfillment. With the Lutheran Confessions, we recognize the presence of Messianic prophecies about Jesus Christ throughout the Old Testament. Accordingly, we acknowledge that the Old Testament “promises that the Messiah will come and promises forgiveness of sins, justification, and eternal life for His sake” (Apology, IV, 5) and that the patriarchs and their descendants comforted themselves with such Messianic promises (cf. FC, SD, V, 23).

We therefore reject the following views:

1. That the New Testament statements about Old Testament texts and events do not establish their meaning (for example, the claim that Jesus’ reference to Psalm 110 in Matthew 22:43-44 does not establish either that Psalm’s Davidic authorship or its predictive Messianic character).

2. That Old Testament prophecies are to be regarded as Messianic prophecies, not in the sense of being genuinely predictive, but only in the sense that the New Testament later applies them to New Testament events.

3. That the Old Testament prophets never recognized that their prophecies reached beyond their own time to the time of Christ.

I. Historical Methods of Biblical Interpretation

Since God is the Lord of history and has revealed Himself by acts in history and has in the person of His Son actually entered into man’s history, we acknowledge that the historical framework in which the Gospel message is set in Scripture is an essential part of the Word. Furthermore, we recognize that the inspired Scriptures are historical documents written in various times, places, and circumstances. We therefore believe that the Scriptures invite his-

torical investigation and are to be taken seriously as historical documents. We affirm, however, that the Christian interpreter of Scripture cannot adopt uncritically the pre-suppositions and canons of the secular historian, but that he will be guided in his use of historical techniques by the pre-suppositions of his faith in the Lord of history, who reveals Himself in Holy Scripture as the one who creates, sustains, and even enters our history in order to lead it to His end. We therefore reject the following views:

1. That the question of whether certain events described in the Scripture actually happened is unimportant in view of the purpose and function of Holy Scripture.

2. That methods based on secularistic and naturalistic notions of history, such as the following, may have a valid role in Biblical interpretation:

- a. That the universe is closed to the intervention of God or any supernatural force.
- b. That miracles are to be explained in naturalistic terms whenever possible.
- c. That the principle of the economy of miracles may lead us to deny certain miracles reported in the Scriptures.
- d. That the doctrines of Holy Scripture are the result of a natural development or evolution of ideas and experiences within Israel and the early church.
- e. That the message of Scripture can be adequately measured by laws derived exclusively from empirical data and rational observation.
- f. That man's inability to know the future makes genuine predictive prophecy an impossibility.

3. That our primary concern in Biblical interpretation is not with explaining the meaning of the primary sources, namely, the canonical Scriptures, on the basis of the sources themselves.

4. That if the use of historical methods leads to conclusions at variance with the evident meaning of the Biblical text, such conclusions may be accepted without violating the Lutheran view of Scripture or our commitment to the Lutheran Confessions (for example, the claim that it is permissible to deny the existence of angels or a personal devil because of literary, historical, or theological considerations).

V. Original Sin

We believe, teach, and confess that God, by the almighty power of His Word, created all things. We also believe that man, as the principal creature of God, was specially created in the image of God, that is, in a state of righteousness, innocence, and blessedness. We affirm that Adam and Eve were real historical human beings, the first two people in the world, and that their fall was a historical occurrence which brought sin into the world so that "since the fall of Adam all men who are propagated according to nature are born in sin" (AC, II, 1). We confess that man's fall necessitated the gracious redemptive work of Jesus Christ and that fallen man's only hope for salvation from his sin lies in Jesus Christ, his Redeemer and Lord.

We therefore reject the following:

1. All world views, philosophical theories, and exegetical interpretations which pervert these Biblical teachings and thus obscure the Gospel.

2. The notion that man did not come into being through the direct creative action of God, but through a process of evolution from lower forms of life which in turn developed from matter that is either eternal, autonomous, or self-generating.

3. The opinion that the image of God in which Adam and Eve were created did not consist of concreated righteousness, that is, a perfect relationship to God.

4. The notion that Adam and Eve were not real historical persons and that their fall was not a real historical event which brought sin and death into the world.

5. The opinion that original sin does not deprive all men of their spiritual powers and make it impossible for them to be in the right relationship to God apart from faith in Jesus Christ.

VI. Confessional Subscription

We reaffirm our acceptance of the Scriptures as the inspired and inerrant Word of God, and our unconditional subscription to "all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God" (Constitution, Article II;

cf. also Bylaw 4.21). We accept the Confessions because they are drawn from the Word of God and on that account regard their doctrinal content as a true and binding exposition of Holy Scripture and as authoritative for our work as ministers of Jesus Christ and servants of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

We accept the following clarifications of the nature of our confessional subscription:

1. We acknowledge that the doctrinal content of the Lutheran Confessions includes not only those doctrines of Holy Scripture explicitly treated in the Confessions but also those Biblical doctrines set forth somewhat indirectly or incidentally, such as the doctrines of Holy Scripture, creation, the Holy Spirit, and eschatology.

2. With the fathers, we recognize that not everything in the Lutheran Confessions is a part of its doctrinal content, but we reject all attempts to abridge the extent of this doctrinal content in an arbitrary or subjective manner. We recognize, for example, that subscription to the Lutheran Confessions does not bind us to all strictly exegetical details contained in the Confessions, or even to the confessional use of certain Bible passages to support a particular theological statement. However, since the Confessions want to be understood as Biblical expositions, we reject the notion that we are not bound by our confessional subscription to the exposition of Scripture contained in the Confessions or to the doctrinal content which the Confessions derive from individual Bible passages.

3. We recognize that the Confessions must be read and studied in terms of the historical situations in which they were written, but we reject the view that our confessional subscription means only that we regard the Confessions as a historically correct response to the problems encountered by the church when the Confessions were written.

4. We recognize that the doctrinal content of the Confessions centers in Jesus Christ and the Gospel of our justification by grace through faith, but we reject the view that the doctrinal content of the Confessions includes only those confessional statements which explicitly and directly deal with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Accordingly, we do not accept the idea that our subscription to the Lutheran Confessions permits us to reject such confessional positions as the existence of the devil and of angels or that Adam and Eve were real historical persons whose fall into sin was a real historical event.

5. We recognize that the Lutheran Confessions contain no distinct article on the nature of Holy Scripture and its interpretation, but we acknowledge and accept the confessional understanding of the nature of Holy Scripture and of the proper theological principles for its interpretation.

6. We recognize the Lutheran Confessions as a true exposition of Holy Scripture and therefore reject the opinion that our subscription to the Lutheran Confessions leaves us free to reject any doctrinal statements of the Confessions where we feel there is no supporting Biblical evidence.

7. We acknowledge that our subscription to the Lutheran Confessions pledges us to preach and teach in accordance with the entire Holy Scripture. We therefore reject the opinion that all Biblical matters not explicitly treated in the Lutheran Confessions are open questions.

8. We confess that the Holy Scriptures are the only rule and norm for faith and life, and that other writings "should not be put on a par with Holy Scripture" (FC, Ep, 1-2). We therefore reject the notion that it is legitimate to maintain the doctrinal conclusions of the Confessions without accepting their Biblical basis, or to regard formal confessional subscription as an adequate safeguard against improper exegetical conclusions.

9. Finally, we affirm that our acceptance of the Lutheran Confessions means not only that we tolerate the doctrinal content of the Lutheran Confessions as a viable option for Lutheran Christians today but that we in fact preach, teach, and confess the doctrinal content of the Lutheran Confessions as our very own.

Conclusion

The 1971 convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod reaffirmed the Synod's desire to abide by its doctrinal position as stated in its constitution (Article II). The Synod clearly stated its conviction that its confessional base is as broad as Holy Scripture and that the Synod accepts anything and everything that the Scriptures teach. Moreover, the Synod declared its right as a Synod to apply its confessional

base definitively to current issues and thus conserve and promote unity and resist an individualism which breeds schism.

This Statement expresses the Synod's Scriptural and

confessional stance on a number of important topics. It is hoped that the endorsement of this Statement will be of assistance to the Synod in the "conservation and promotion of the unity of the true faith" (Constitution, Article III).

Appendix V

An Opinion of the CTCR on the Interpretation of A Review of the Question "What Is a Doctrine?"

The Board of Control of a synodical institution has requested the CTCR for a theological opinion on a matter which is officially before the Board. In offering the following response, the CTCR wishes to emphasize that it is giving a theological opinion in response to a theological question; it is not acting as a judicial body to pass judgment on the case before the Board of Control. We understand the basic question of the Board of Control to be: Does the document entitled "A Review of the Question 'What Is A Doctrine?'" maintain that matters pertaining to the authorship of Biblical books and the historicity of certain Biblical accounts are outside the scope of "doctrine," so that it is improper to regard certain opinions on such matters as "false doctrine"? The following considerations are involved in answering this question.

1. The document recognizes that the term "doctrine" is used in various senses in the church. It may be used to refer to the organic whole of Christian teaching centering in Jesus Christ, or to a part of the Biblical teaching on Christian faith and life, or even to the activity of teaching. The term "false doctrine" may legitimately reflect any of these senses of "doctrine."

2. In any of these senses, the term "doctrine" is normally used to refer to basic Biblical teaching on Christian faith and life and not to describe specific details of the Biblical teaching. For example, the Biblical teachings that Nimrod was a hunter, that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans, or that the temple was located in Jerusalem are not usually considered "doctrines" in themselves.

3. The document states that "Teachings contrary to or improperly drawn from Holy Scripture must be rejected" (III, 4). Whenever Biblical teachings of any kind (whether we call them "doctrines" or not) are denied or contradicted, "doctrine" is affected. Whatever the specific subject may be with which they deal, false teachings undermine the authority of Holy Scripture. The authority of Holy Scripture is "a" doctrine, that is, "a part of the whole Biblical teaching on Christian faith and life," III, 2. Moreover, Holy Scripture is also the church's only source for "the" doctrine, that is, the organic whole of Christian teaching centering in Jesus Christ. Accordingly, the denial or contradiction of any teaching of Scripture involves doctrine. The words of Dr. C. F. W. Walther quoted in the document need to be remembered:

If, in a doctrinal controversy, the dispute is about doctrines which do not belong to the articles of faith, everything depends for us on whether those who contradict show that they do so because they do not want to submit to the Word of God, and therefore on whether, while appearing to let the basic doctrines of the Word of God stand, they nevertheless overthrow the very foundation upon which all these doctrines rest: the Word of God. (Quoted in note 25 from *Der Lutheraner*, XXVII [May 1, 1871], 131)

4. Just as we do not usually refer to all Biblical teachings as "doctrines," so also we do not ordinarily label Jesus' statements about authorship or the historicity of certain events as "doctrines." However, the denial or contradiction of the intended meaning of such statements affects both the authority of Scripture and the person of Christ and is therefore a doctrinal matter. The CTCR has written:

Differences of opinion exist within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod on the import of the words of Christ and other statements of Holy Scripture concerning the human authorship of certain Old Testament books. Much of the concern in this issue is not intrinsically isagogical, but is rather related to the *sola scriptura* and *solus Christus* principles of Lutheranism. Some maintain that Christ and the Biblical authors clearly teach that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, Isaiah and Daniel wrote the entire books that bear their names, and David wrote Psalm 110, while others question these conclusions. This difference of

opinion raises a Christological question: Can one question the designations of authorship employed by Jesus without thereby calling into question His sinless manhood, omniscience, and even His deity? It also raises a question with regard to the authority of Scripture: Can one challenge any statement of Holy Scripture on the authorship of Biblical books without thereby challenging the authority and truthfulness of the Scriptures? (Quoted from p. 3 of the CTCR document entitled *The Witness of Jesus and Old Testament Authorship*)

5. The document states that "A mistaken exegesis of a passage or section of Scripture does not constitute false doctrine, provided it does not conflict with any part of the Christian doctrine" (III, 5). Here the words "mistaken exegesis" have reference to interpretations which are not in conflict with other statements of Scripture but are "mistaken" for other reasons. This statement does not say that mistaken exegesis can never involve false doctrine. On the contrary, any exegesis which conflicts with "any part of the Christian doctrine," including the authority of Scripture, is false doctrine.

6. When the document states that "Isagogical judgments, that is, statements dealing with the authorship and background of Biblical books, are not in themselves 'doctrine' or 'doctrines' but aids to the better understanding of Scripture" (III, 6, italics added), it does not imply that the isagogical information provided by the Scriptures is unrelated to doctrine. Such information cannot be contradicted without calling the authority of Scripture into question. Moreover, while "incorrect isagogical judgments are not in themselves false doctrines" (italics added), they are false doctrine if they set aside or call into question what the Scriptures teach. Such isagogical judgments undermine Biblical authority and thereby "endanger not only individual Christian doctrines but the whole Christian doctrine" (III, 6).

7. In our previously published statements, we have noted the following two examples of such incorrect isagogical judgments: (1) That Moses did not write of Jesus in "his writings" (John 5:39-47), and (2) That "David inspired by the Spirit" did not call Jesus "Lord" (Matt. 22:43; Psalm 110:1). With regard to the former, the commission has explicitly stated that Jesus in John 5:39-47 attributes authorship to Moses, but without explicitly stating the extent of that authorship (cf. "A Response to Questions on 'The Witness of Jesus and Old Testament Authorship,'" questions 6 and 9). Concerning the latter, the commission has stated that "David is named by Jesus as the author of Ps. 110" in Matt. 22:43, and has noted that in that passage Jesus "argues from the Davidic authorship of the Psalm" (cf. "The Witness of Jesus and Old Testament Authorship").

8. On the subject of Biblical authorship, the commission has stated:

The synod has affirmed that we are to accept whatever the Bible says about itself, including its human authorship, but has also recognized that isagogical matters not conclusively answered by the Scriptures are not matters of doctrine and should therefore not be treated as factors affecting the Christian fellowship" (*An Evaluation of "A Call to Openness and Trust,"* p. 6, point 4 b).

The commission has also discussed the question of authorship in its document *The Witness of Jesus and Old Testament Authorship* and in *A Response to Questions on "The Witness of Jesus and Old Testament Authorship."*

9. Holy Scripture is the sole standard for determining what is "doctrine" and whether "doctrine" is true or false. The Lutheran Confessions, because they are "drawn from the Word of God" (Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Rule and Norm, 10), are a secondary norm for the faith and life of the church. But the confessions do not claim to deal with all doctrinal questions. Treatment or non-treatment in the confessions is therefore not a criterion for de-

termining whether a question is doctrinal. Accordingly, questions not treated in the confessions but dealt with in the Scriptures may well be "doctrinal" questions.

Conclusion: The Commission on Theology and Church Relations holds that the document entitled "A Review of the Question 'What Is A Doctrine?'" does not maintain that matters pertaining to the authorship of Biblical books and the historicity of certain Biblical accounts are outside the scope of "doctrine." Teachings and judgments on such matters ordinarily are not considered "doctrine" or "doctrines" in themselves. However, any teaching or judgment which denies or contradicts what the Scriptures teach must be considered "false doctrine." For such a denial or contradiction

is in conflict with the doctrine of the authority of Holy Scripture, the only infallible source and norm of all doctrine. Moreover, the doctrine of the person of Jesus Christ is also involved in the consideration of any of His statements, including those which deal with isagogical or historical matters. In short, the commission holds that it is a doctrinal matter to contradict or deny whatever the Bible teaches on any subject.

Adopted by the Commission on Theology
and Church Relations
May 24, 1971

Appendix VI a

Portion of Address by Synodical President to St. Louis Seminary Faculty, May 17, 1972

Let me briefly point out to you certain items from the report which are an object of concern to the synodical president and indeed in some instances to the Synod as these positions become known through the media of writings, lectures, open forums, and classroom teaching. I am sure that the listing of none of these items will come as a surprise to you. It is equally certain that it will not come as surprise to you that many in the Synod challenge whether these positions can be regarded as representing fidelity to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

The following list of concerns is lifted from the Fact Finding Committee Report. It is not a complete list. Nor are the concerns stated in formal fashion. It is simply a list of various positions and responses which merit attention:

1. A limitation on the subscription to the Lutheran Confessions by:

- a. Restricting the definition of "doctrine" so narrowly that such items as the creation and historicity of Adam and Eve and of the fall of man are not regarded as items in the doctrinal category. Thus confessional commitment in this instance is reduced to merely this that God creates and man is in a fallen state.
- b. The use of the concept of the "intent" of the confessions to escape from items the confessions patently teach; similarly the use of the term "theological construction" to make possible non-acceptance of items which the confessions present as doctrine.
- c. The extension of the concept that we are not bound to accept all the "exegetical details" of the confessions to the defense of the right to refuse to accept the basic exegetical conclusions of the confessions, e. g., the confessions' interpretation of the messianic prophecies and of the faith of the Old Testament patriarchs.

2. The entire question as to what it means to "honor and uphold" doctrinal statements of the Synod; the interpretation of this phrase to mean only to study these statements to determine their adequacy.

3. The absence of a clear cut and well defined position on the inspiration of the Scriptures.

4. The position that tradition in the church may be inspired in the same sense that Holy Scripture is inspired.

5. The stance that the Scriptures are not inerrant in the classical understanding of that term; the limitation of inerrancy to functional inerrancy.

6. The peculiar use of the Gospel as a hermeneutical principle, as a criterion for determining whether one may or may not allow latitude in accepting other teachings of Scripture. This is in contrast to the confessional position that the Scripture is the source and norm of doctrine, that the Gospel is the chief doctrine and is a hermeneutical presupposition. Cf. the question concerning allowing possible alternate interpretations of a teaching of Scripture — "Does it harm the Gospel?"

7. The hermeneutical practice of establishing the overall "intent" of a pericope and then dismissing secondary "intent" within the pericope as unimportant and not binding, thus not accepting the totality of what a biblical author intends to say within a segment of discourse. Closely related is the practice of deriving the essential meaning of a pericope from the various "intentions" of its alleged pre-canonical sources, rather than from the evident meaning of the canonical text itself. Cf. the now famous example of the miracle of the crossing of the Red Sea on dry land (Exodus 14).

8. The entire complex subject of the historical-critical

method. It is not clear that the exegetical department uses this method in a manner essentially different from the ordinary practitioners of the method, references to Lutheran presuppositions notwithstanding.

The position that the historical-critical method is a neutral tool is an inadequate metaphor and confuses the issue. It is not a tool. It is a method which uses various scholarly tools, e. g., linguistics, history, archaeology. Moreover, it is a method complete with presuppositions and specific goals. It is apparent from the results of some of the exegesis at the seminary that the findings are quite similar to those produced by typical historical critics; e. g., in the Fact Finding Committee's report one finds that various seminary professors:

- a. Are unwilling to affirm the certainty of the existence of the Old Testament patriarchs as persons who lived and had the experiences related in the canonical text;
- b. Are unwilling to affirm the historicity of the account of the brazen serpent;
- c. Leave as an open exegetical question whether John the Baptist was ever in the wilderness in his ministry;
- d. Regard it as legitimate to ask whether Christ's walking on water might not be a "literary device" rather than an historic event;
- e. The words of Jesus recorded in the Gospels may be only "interpretations" of Him produced by members of the Christian community;
- f. The principle of the "economy of miracles" may induce one to attribute a given miracle to midrashic influence.

9. The entire question of the unity within and between the two testaments particularly the reluctance of Old Testament exegetes to maintain the Lutheran principle that whatever the New Testament says about Old Testament persons, events, or statements (including messianic prophecies) is in fact true.

10. The acceptance of the theory of theistic evolution as a viable option.

11. A reluctance in some instances to produce an adverse judgment on those who, for exegetical reasons, do not accept the virgin birth.

12. The position that the second and third use of the Law are essentially the same function, thereby calling into question the continuing validity of the Law as God's norm for Christian living.

13. Intercommunion. Non-Lutherans may be admitted to the Lord's Supper if they believe in Christ and if their confession of the Lord's Supper is adequate.

Perhaps this is sufficient for now. These items are not intended to be an exhaustive list. However, they do represent a sample of theological issues and doctrinal positions which disturb the church and which are, nevertheless, held by some of the professors of this seminary. In many instances they are positions which were also objects of concern by Doctor Behnken and Doctor Harms.

Brethren, these positions trouble many throughout our Synod. Correspondence testifies to that. For example, may I share with you a letter from a local pastor, signed by twelve witnesses who attest that the report is accurate. It is addressed to the Board of Control, but it is expressly stated: "Since President J. A. O. Preus is directly supervising the doctrine taught at the Seminary, we have taken the liberty of mailing a copy of this letter to him."

(Read letter.)

Brethren, I assure you that this is no isolated protest. It is a cry that comes from all over the Synod, again and again.

Let me now proceed to my five requests to which I am expecting a reply in writing, just as I am ready to answer your Response in writing.

1. First I have a request of President Tietjen. The request is simply this that he tell both the Board of Control and the synodical president his position on the issues about which I have just expressed concern. Is he in agreement with the positions referred to? If he is in disagreement with these or any other theological or doctrinal position held by any of the faculty, what has he done in terms of fraternal admonition and what is the state of his counseling with any such individuals? I would appreciate a personal reply in writing at his earliest convenience.

2. Let me preface my second request by noting that it is quite possible that the formulation of positions just listed does not in your opinion state the issues fairly or adequately. This can always be established by reference to the tapes from the fact finding interviews and by reference to the literature cited in the report. However, even if the formulations of these concerns could be improved, you brethren know quite well the stance of various individuals on the faculty. There is evidence in the fact finding report that not all of you share these positions as your own. I am speaking now of others beyond the five of the so-called "faculty minority." It remains then to determine if those individuals who do not hold these views personally, nevertheless, regard them as valid options which Lutheran theologians may teach to the Synod's future pastors.

It is quite obvious that the matter before us is complicated indeed. Yet it must be dealt with. It was in view of this that I attempted to aid the Board of Control by offering to them the *Statement on Scriptural and Confessional Principles*. The *Statement* is intended primarily as an instrument for establishing the position of men on various issues. It is not offered to the church as a new confession or test of orthodoxy. But it does provide a useful means to segregate for the board, the faculty, and indeed the entire church, what are the issues which trouble us and what are the issues in which we are agreed.

It is obvious and indeed quite elemental that a faculty is made up of individuals. It is also patent that not all on the faculty are agreed. Some have been quite open about their disagreements on various issues. Others have not spoken on the subject. It is necessary for the Board of Control to handle the fact finding committee report and the entire issue by looking at the individual positions. It is because of this that on March 3 I called for individual answers to the *Statement*. What a marvelous thing it would be to have various paragraphs agreed to by every individual. How helpful it would be on other articles to have men say that they disagree, and then say clearly why they disagree and what they indeed believe to be scriptural and confessional on that point.

I have carefully read the joint response which you made to the pastors of the Synod as a reply to the *Statement on Scriptural and Confessional Principles*. You have asked some questions in that response. However, I believe the Synod will be served better by definitive answers with documentation rather than by rhetorical questions. Moreover, a joint response does not serve the purpose. Your questions merit consideration, but such consideration should properly follow an adequate response to my March 3 request that the faculty members, not the faculty jointly, respond to the *Statement*.

Brethren, my second request is that you provide the Board of Control and the Office of the synodical President with individual responses to the *Statement* by June 1. Indeed it will be most helpful in dealing with the fact finding report. What possible reason can there be for anyone to refuse?

3. We come now to my third request. As recently as the April meeting of the Board of Control I asked Doctor Tietjen in a letter to bring to the Board of Control and also to you the request that a selected group from within the faculty sit down and attempt also as a group to isolate issues and see if it were possible for the faculty to settle some of these matters within itself.

Specifically I suggested that a group of faculty members, representing in general two points of view enter into an intensive discussion of the *Statement*. One would expect that out of such a dialog there would come a report on the degree of commonality of faith and the areas of disagree-

ment isolated and delineated in a more careful theological way. It would seem that the faculty "minority" and the faculty's special committee on the fact finding venture would serve well in this capacity.

Brethren, this is my third request, that you immediately set up such a dialog with a report due to the Board and the synodical president by, say, June 10.

Neither of these requests requires any approval from the Board of Control. The faculty can clearly respond to them on its own. It would be clearly in the best interest of all concerned if both these requests were honored with all proper dispatch. The date for the fulfillment of Resolution 2-28 draws inexorably closer. The Synod has asked the Board of Control to study and act on the Fact Finding Committee Report and to report to the synodical President and the Board for Higher Education within one year of the Milwaukee convention. The synodical President is then to report to the Synod. It is quite clear that the church expects this resolution to be carried out. It is also quite clear that no one in the church stands to profit from a failure to do everything possible by the deadline.

4. My fourth request is that the faculty respond to Resolutions 2-21 and 5-24 of the Milwaukee convention. These resolutions are the voice of the representatives of the entire Synod. In view of the public position taken by the faculty on the meaning of the "honor and uphold" prior to the convention, it would help clear the air to have the faculty inform the Board of Control and the synodical president of its willingness to accept and live by the resolutions regarding the status of synodical doctrinal statements adopted by the Milwaukee convention.

5. My fifth request is a simple one. The Synod rightfully expects its professors to teach clearly. Academic integrity alone demands that we speak clearly and without equivocation. When any spokesman of the seminary speaks to the church, at a district convention or elsewhere, let him make sure the people understand what he means. If you speak of verbal inspiration, of all Scripture being God's Word, of inerrancy, of historicity, of acceptance of miracles, etc.—in every case it is incumbent on you to say in words that any child can understand if you mean these things in the way Missouri has used them in the past or if you are introducing new concepts or factors into the theological arena. Can any of us in love and openness do any less?

In conclusion, let me assure you that what I have said here and elsewhere is said in love for you, in love for our church, and in love, above all, of our great God and His precious Gospel. It is not my desire to harass you and make your lives difficult. I join you in longing for peace and quiet and the opportunity to put all our energies into the work of our Lord. It is also true that where a man fails to demonstrate genuine confessional commitment in his teaching the Synod must and will deal with him. The rights of individuals, the rights of those with whom we are in a covenant relationship in the church, and above all the will of God as expressed in His Word, together with that great commission to proclaim the Gospel—all these must and will be respected by us all.

I thank you for your attention in listening to me. I have brought you five simple requests in the hope they will assist in reaching a solution to the problems that face us. Let me recapitulate:

1. A request to the seminary president for his appraisal and information on any ministering he may have done relative to these matters.

2. A request to the faculty to respond to the *Statement* individually by June 1.

3. A request for a dialog on the *Statement* between the faculty minority and a like number of the majority with a report by June 10.

4. A request for a response to Milwaukee convention resolutions 2-21 and 5-24.

5. A request for complete frankness and clarity in expressing theological positions.

I will be glad to comment further on any of these requests. I await your response.

Again, thank you for your attention.

J. A. O. Preus

Statement to the Faculty
Concordia Seminary
St. Louis
May 17, 1972

Appendix VI b

Response of St. Louis Seminary Faculty to May 17, 1972, Meeting

May 30, 1972

The Reverend Jacob A. O. Preus, President
The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod
210 North Broadway
St. Louis, Missouri 63102

Dear President Preus,

With this letter we are responding to the requests you made of us when you met with us on the 17th of this month.

First of all, we want to express our thanks to you for coming, for speaking with us directly, and for listening to our presentation of our concerns and questions. That, as you know, is a hope we have cherished for a long time. We believe that continued consultations of this kind are essential for mutual understanding and the achievement of harmony. At our last meeting you explicitly identified (and we did too) "a light at the end of the tunnel," namely, that we now agree at least on what the issue is: the mutual impingement of Scripture and Gospel. That much agreement already implies hope, but also much unfinished business. We need to converse further with you concerning our conviction that the Gospel of Jesus Christ takes priority in our use of Scripture, in our use of the Confessions, and in our dealings as Christian brothers with one another. Therefore we look forward to additional discussion with you. How soon may we hope for that?

Now to respond to the requests you made of us in your presentation to the faculty.

A) You requested President Tietjen to "tell both the Board of Control and the synodical President his position on the issues about which I [President Preus] have just expressed concern. Is he in agreement with the positions referred to? If he is in disagreement with these or any other theological or doctrinal position held by any of the faculty, what has he done in terms of fraternal admonition and what is the state of his counseling with any such individuals?"

We do not presume to answer for President Tietjen, but since you made your request of him in the presence of the entire faculty, we inquire, Do you ask the President of the Seminary to comment on issues which you say arise from the Fact Finding report without yourself in every case first talking with the individuals who presumably hold the positions you find unsatisfactory or inadequate? As for ourselves, we want you to know that we appreciate the efforts of the President of the Seminary as he supervises and encourages the doctrinal commitment of the members of the faculty. We wish to assure you that we teach in accord with the standards set forth in Article II of the Constitution of Synod.

B) Your second request is that the members of the faculty "provide the Board of Control and the office of the synodical President with individual responses to the *Statement* by June 1."

In the preface to your request you say that in publishing your *Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* you did not intend that it be "a new confession or test of orthodoxy." Yet you urge us to show point by point and individually where we agree or disagree with it. To comply with your request under the present circumstances would be to give your *Statement* precisely that confessional status as a test of orthodoxy which you say you do not wish it to have.

Furthermore, as you note, the faculty has already responded to the *Statement*. The *Response* which the faculty issued to your *Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* expressed the position of the faculty as a whole and of the large number of faculty members who voted to adopt it. In fact, suggestions about what response the faculty should make were solicited from the whole faculty, received from many faculty members, and incorporated in the suggested *Response* submitted to the faculty. Each faculty member who voted to adopt the *Response* was affirming it as his own

response to your *Statement*. Our *Response* is what the faculty as a whole and those individual members who voted for it want to say to you in response to your *Statement*.

More important to us in this connection, however, is the present status of the Fact Finding inquiry, as it was announced in 1970 and as it was dealt with in resolution 2-28 of the Milwaukee convention in 1971. It has called for an inordinate expenditure of time and energy on the part of the entire faculty during two complete academic years. We have cooperated with you and your committee and have furnished all that was requested of us by the Fact Finding Committee. The Seminary Board of Control has been making an intensive study of your Fact Finding Committee's work and will, no doubt, report to you shortly. We therefore believe that at this time no new factors should be injected into the procedure. After the provisions of resolution 2-28 of the Milwaukee convention have been met it is time to consider whatever step or steps may come next.

C) You request "that a group of faculty members, representing in general two points of view enter into an intensive discussion of the *Statement*. . . . It would seem that the faculty 'minority' and the faculty's special committee on the fact-finding venture would serve well in this capacity."

We have long been convinced that, when individual faculty members find that they are not agreed theologically, they should confer frankly and fraternally with each other, seek to understand each other and to resolve what differences lie between them in the realm of confessional commitment. In many and various forms discussion has been going on between individuals and among groups. However we are opposed to the division of the faculty into factions by the use of such designations as "minority" and we are convinced that your proposal will do little to further faculty unity. When theological differences seem to involve more than an individual or two, then the cause is best served when formal discussions are held in the faculty plenum where all can participate, hear what each one says and ask and answer questions. Accordingly, as soon as the next academic year begins we shall, God willing, in accordance with your request "sit down and attempt . . . to isolate issues and see if it [is] possible for the faculty to settle some of these matters within itself."

D) Your fourth request is "that the faculty respond to resolutions 2-21 and 5-24 of the Milwaukee convention."

The question of the status and use of synodically adopted doctrinal statements has claimed the attention of the synod for a long time. Sustained efforts to have synodical conventions pronounce as "official" certain interpretations of portions of Sacred Scripture and to make doctrinal statements and resolutions binding on all members have been made steadily for the past 25 years. But again and again the convention delegates, by varying majorities, have refused to accede to these overtures and to make binding more than Article II of the synodical constitution does. The only exception was the San Francisco convention of 1959. Its action, however, was declared unconstitutional at the Cleveland convention in 1962.

We are convinced that the New York convention of 1967, by adopting "A Declaration on the Status and Use of Synodically Adopted Doctrinal Statements" acted according to the letter and the spirit of the synodical constitution and set a pattern for our day which ought to put an end to efforts geared toward the passing of binding doctrinal resolutions. It is also our conviction that assent to Christian doctrine is gained by the power of the Holy Spirit operative through Law and Gospel. We believe that all members of the synod should take seriously what also our dogmatists recognized, namely that a majority vote never legitimates the birth of a doctrinal statement, but rather that the church must always and only set forth from Scripture the doctrine it teaches and must profess this doctrine against error.

We therefore view also the Milwaukee resolutions 2-21 and 5-24 as adding nothing to the obligatory confession of the members of the synod and as included under resolution 2-04 of New York. We are mindful of the plea of several conventions beseeching the members of the synod "by the mer-

cies of God to honor and uphold the doctrinal content of synodically adopted doctrinal statements." Certainly no one should disparage or ridicule such statements nor impugn their legitimacy, but all members of the synod should respect them, study them, learn from them, and (in the words of Milwaukee 2-21, quoting Denver 2-27) not "give them more or less status than they deserve." We are aware of the distinction made in Milwaukee 5-24 between convention resolutions concerning doctrine and more formal statements adopted after study and discussion throughout the Synod. We are also aware of provisions for registering criticism of the latter type of statements and for seeking changes in them. We expect to act accordingly.

E) In your meeting with us you also asked the following: "When any spokesman of the seminary speaks for the church, at a district convention or elsewhere, let him make sure that the people understand what he means."

The subject of understandable and understood communication in this age of tension, distraction, bias and strong emotional reaction is one that could prompt considerable comment. We admit, however, that on occasion we have failed to communicate properly, sometimes because of our concern not to speak too bluntly, sometimes through human frailty,

sometimes in spite of our best intentions and preparation. We take your request in the spirit in which it is given and promise to do our best to speak and write clearly, forthrightly and with consideration for others. May we in turn request that you do the same and that you use your good offices to make clear to the members of our synod that they should not judge us on hearsay or on partial evidence, but that they should hear us personally, try sincerely to understand what we are endeavoring to say and hear us out. The results will be mutually beneficial.

We are glad you promise us a reply to our *Response of the Faculty of Concordia Seminary*, St. Louis, April 4, 1972. The *faculty Response* contains affirmations as well as questions and we await your reply. We thank you also for your oral agreement to answer the concerns of the faculty as set forth in the document presented to you when you met with us on May 17

Your brothers in Christ,

The Faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER, Sr.,
Secretary

Appendix VI c

Response of Dr. Tietjen to May 17, 1972, Meeting

June 12, 1972

The Reverend Dr. J. A. O. Preus, President
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
210 North Broadway
St. Louis, Missouri 63102

Dear Jack:

In your presentation to the seminary faculty on May 17 you addressed the *first of your five requests to me*, asking that I indicate my position on a series of issues to which you had referred and that I state what fraternal admonition I had given in connection with those matters.

As you pointed out in your presentation, the issues to which you referred were drawn from your Fact Finding Report. The Synod through Milwaukee Convention Resolution 2-28

has given the seminary's Board of Control the responsibility of reviewing the Fact Finding Committee Report and of reporting to you and the Board for Higher Education. For me to comment at this time on the list of issues in your presentation to the faculty would be to assume a responsibility which the Synod has given to the Board of Control.

I want to assure you that I am carrying out my supervisory responsibility in relation to the faculty. I have ascertained the positions of individual faculty members and have assured myself through personal discussion that members of the faculty are not teaching contrary to their confessional commitment.

Cordially,

JOHN H. TIETJEN
President